LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

FATHER CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

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LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

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ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

From the 13th Century Picture at Christ Church, Oxford, ascribed to Margaritone

LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

BY

FATHER CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

In this new edition of my *Life of St Francis* I have in several places corrected the original text in the light of fuller knowledge, and have added a few footnotes. The chief correction regards St. Clare's attitude towards the Ugoline Constitutions. In the original text I erroneously stated that these Constitutions imposed upon the Poor Clares (to use the later designation of the Poor Ladies) the possession of property. The Constitutions, in imposing the Benedictine Rule, certainly left the Sisters free to hold property. But Honorius III in his letter, *Litteræ tuæ*, addressed to Cardinal Ugolino on 27 August, 1218, expressly reserved to the Holy See the ownership of the land appropriated to the use of the communities of Poor Ladies. Whether Ugolino himself was altogether in favour of this decree is doubtful. Shortly after his elevation to the Pontificate he certainly permitted the Poor Ladies to accept property and endowments. I think, however, that St. Clare's main contention was that the sisters should be recognised as within the Franciscan "family" both as regards jurisdiction and the Rule they were to observe.

On other points in regard to which this book has been criticised, the formation of the primitive fraternity and the developments which took place under the rule of the Vicars, I still adhere to the conclusions at which I had arrived when this book was first published.

FR. CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

GROSSETESTE HOUSE,
OXFORD.
December, 1920.

AUTHOR'S NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

I GLADLY take the opportunity afforded by the publication of a second edition of my *Life of St. Francis*, to acknowledge the generosity and courtesy with which the book has been received by the reviewers. To the suggestions and criticisms which some of them have put forward, I have given careful consideration. In consequence, some slight alterations have been made in the text.

My renewed endeavour to obtain a copy of the original document of the peace-treaty between Perugia and Assisi (*vide infra*, p. 18) has again been without result. But I must thank Mr. William Heywood, the author of *A History of Perugia*, for kindly lending me a copy of *Bollettino de la R.D. di Storia Patria per l'Umbra*, Vol. VIII., in which are printed several documents concerning the relations between the two Umbrian cities during the years 1203-1209. From these documents it would seem that the feud brought about by the action of the disaffected Assisian nobles, extended over a long period. One document seems to show that a state of war existed in November, 1203

The text of a peace-treaty is given with the date 31 August, 1205. Not improbably, however, having regard to what seems to have been the usual course of things in medieval Italy, there was a succession of peace-makings and renewals of war before peace was finally established; and the prisoners may have been released at one of the abortive peace-makings.

A third document is interesting because it shows that even in September, 1209, Assisi had not fulfilled the treaty of 1205 in so far as it related to the restitution of their property to the disaffected nobles. Possibly the state of affairs implied in this document may have some relationship with the treaty of concord of November, 1210, which some writers attribute to the influence of St. Francis (*vide infra*, p. 119). If this be so, St. Francis' participation in the early stage of the war, acquires an even more dramatic character.

One other point raised in regard to this book, calls for remark. A critic, less courteous than others, accuses me of misrepresenting the description of the stigmata, written by Brother Elias shortly after the saint's death. In the text I have adhered to the statements made by Celano and St. Bonaventure: in a footnote I refer the reader to the letter of Elias as further corroborative evidence to the authenticity of the description given in the text. But the critic sees a contradiction between the evidence as contained in the words of Elias and that given in the "official"

biographies, and he suggests that I deliberately withheld the knowledge of this contradiction from the unwary reader. With his insinuation of dishonesty of purpose, I need not concern myself. Let us come to the evidence given by Elias. The words are: *Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum et miraculi novitatem. A seculo non est auditam tale signum præterquam in Filio Dei, qui est Christus Deus. Non diu ante mortem Frater et Pater noster apparuit Crucifixus, quinque plagas, quæ vere sunt stigmata Christi, portans in corpore suo; nam manus ejus et pedes quasi puncturas clavorum habuerunt ex utraque parte confixas reservantes cicatrices et clavorum nigredinem ostendentes, latus vero ejus lanceatum apparuit et saepe sanguinem evaporavit.* The critic concludes that Elias evidently knew nothing about "the heads of the nails" and "the points" described by the official biographers. But this conclusion depends upon the critic's interpretation of Elias' words, "*clavorum nigredinem ostendentes*". The words taken apart from the context might mean anything. We must read them in relation to the context. Now it will be noticed that Elias speaks of the wounds in the hands and feet as *quasi puncturas clavorum* wounds made *as it were* by nails. Does he mean that they were not actual wounds? Certainly not: the context forbids such an interpretation. What Elias intends to convey is that the wounds were not wounds actually made by nails: they were a new miracle and

sign: hence the words *quasi puncturas*. With the same caution of speech he uses the phrase, *clavorum nigredinem*. He sees in the hands and feet "the blackness of nails," or as I think one must rightly render the phrase, "the black appearance of nails": a rendering adopted by Mr. Reginald Balfour in the *Seraphic Keepsake* (p. 38). Elias does not speak of "black nails," any more than he speaks of "wounds made by nails". But just as the wounds are "wounds as it were made by nails," so the nails are "a black appearance, as it were nails". This being so—and the reading seems to me reasonable—there is no contradiction between the statement of Elias and the statements of the official biographers: but rather a close agreement. After all, Celano wrote his *Legenda Prima* only two years or thereabouts after the saint's death, and there were many witnesses at hand who had seen the stigmata whilst the saint lay dead at the Porziuncola. Only prejudice, at this time of day, will attribute to Thomas of Celano a wilful distortion of facts or carelessness in investigation. And certainly the first biographer of the saint is a more credible witness to the facts of the case than is the critic who, seven hundred years after the saint's death, can think of no more plausible theory than that St. Francis, to ease the itching of his body, scratched the wounds in hands, feet and side!

FR. CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

16 *January*, 1913.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

This book is an attempt to represent Saint Francis of Assisi as I have come to know him after many years' study of the early records bearing upon his history. Hitherto no adequate biography of the saint has been written in the English tongue, though Canon Knox Little has given us a study of his character, which is of real merit. Nor does any modern biography, to my thinking, set forth the real St. Francis as he is revealed in the historical records which have come down to us. Paul Sabatier's well-known *Vie de S. François d'Assise* is a delightful piece of literature; but had the author possessed the fuller knowledge supplied by historical research since 1894 —a research in which he himself has taken a leading part—I think that his book would have been a more authentic history. J. Jörgensen's recent work, known to me only in its French translation, has undoubtedly caught more of the spiritual thought and mental atmosphere of St. Francis; and he had the advantage which M. Sabatier did not possess, of the research work just referred to. Nevertheless it

seems to me the final biography of the saint is yet to be desired. I cannot presume to have attained this desired goal: but perhaps this present book may do something towards its attainment: in the hope that it will do so, the book is published.

I must confess my obligations to the many students of St. Francis' history who have gone before me. It will not be invidious if I single out for special mention the Franciscan editors of Quaracchi, P. Edouard d'Alençon and M. Paul Sabatier, to whose patient labours all Franciscan research students gladly pay their tribute of grateful acknowledgment. But to all of whose labours I have availed myself, and whose names will be found in this book, I now render my thanks. Finally I must tender my respectful acknowledgment to the most Rev. Fr. Pacificus of Sejano, Minister-General of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, for his gracious approbation of this "Life" of the Seraphic Francis.

FR. CUTHBERT, O.S.F.C.

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From the 13th Century picture at Christ Church, Oxford, ascribed to Margaritone.

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BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMING OF FRANCIS.

As you go to-day along the white road that leads from the Porziuncola to the city of Assisi, a great peacefulness seems to pervade all the country-side. The ancient city is in repose, resting on the slope of a spur of Monte Subasio, like an old warrior whose fighting days are over. There is something grim in its aspect even in the soft brilliancy of the Umbrian sun. Perhaps it is the old mediaeval fortress and the city wall that can still be seen high up the hill; perhaps it is the grey bare surface of the mountains behind; or perhaps it is the very position of the city built as it were with its back to the hill and its face to all comers whether friends or foes. This touch of sternness, however, does but give a zest to the spirit of peace which broods over it to-day. Its peacefulness is the repose of strength; its rest, the rest of one who has lived.

But Assisi still lives, though its life is not that of the world of strife and tumult. The raucous voices of the cab-drivers who invade the city on the occasion of a *festa*, and the wily bargaining of the sellers of *objets de piété*, and the obtrusive self-advertisement of the new hotels,—these suggest indeed the world that lies beyond the hill-bound valley; but their voices are not the voices which fill the sweet air of

Assisi. These speak neither of barter and gain, nor of strife and tumult, nor of any of the world's vanities, but of that ineffable peace which is born of the deeper life and the deeper joys, aye, and of the deeper sorrows of the spirit. For Assisi even in its spirituality, is very human. The voices in the air are the voices of men, not of angels; of men who have passed through the many complexities of human experience before they found peace. And so the peacefulness which broods over the city and this vast plain before it, warms the heart even whilst it stills the heart's tumult and entices one's thoughts to the peace eternal.

But there was little suggestion of peace in the atmosphere of Assisi in the year 1199. The city was then in the throes of a political upheaval, the outcome of which no one then foresaw; certainly not Francis the light-hearted son of the merchant Pietro Bernardone, whose life story was to be shaped in no small measure by these present happenings.

Like most of the industrial cities of Italy, Assisi had long been rebellious at heart against the domination of the German emperors. The enthusiasm for civic liberty, which had baulked the ambition of Barbarossa but had been obliged to bow the head to the energy of his successor, Henry VI, took new life when death itself put a stop to Henry's victorious progress in 1197 and a few months later in January, 1198, Innocent III ascended the Papal throne. At once Innocent set himself to checkmate the imperial policy inasmuch as it affected the relations of the Empire with the Church and the Italian cities. The deliberate aim of that policy under Barbarossa and his successor had been the subjection of Italy to the Imperial crown and the subordination of the Church to the Imperial prerogative.[1] Innocent's policy was to meet

[1] Cf. Huillard Bréholles, *Vie de Pierre de la Vigne*, Partie IIIe, X.

this menace by increasing the temporal power of the Papacy and welding all the Christian States into a confederacy under Papal suzerainty. Hardly was he seated in St. Peter's chair, than he set his hand to eject the German conquerors from the provinces upon which the Holy See had formerly some claim to overlordship; and in pursuance of this policy he called upon Conrad of Lutzen to deliver up the Rocca of Assisi and surrender all his holdings to the Pope. Conrad, an adventurous Suabian, had been created Duke of Spoleto and Count of Assisi some twenty years previously by Barbarossa; of late years he had resided mostly at the Rocca of Assisi. He was a genial, easy-going tyrant, though a brave soldier. The people dubbed him "The Whimsical": it has been said of him that he had one quality rare in a German overlord,—he had regard for public opinion, and as far as his fealty to the emperor allowed, let them rule themselves.[1] But the foreign yoke galled the cities athirst for independence and the glory of being their own masters. Conrad, knowing himself powerless against Innocent, met the Papal legates at Narni in the spring of the year and signed the surrender. No sooner did the Assisians hear the news than they gathered together and in a glorious frenzy razed the Rocca to the ground. Never again, they were determined, should the hated fortress hold their city in subjection. Thereupon the Papal legates protested that the Rocca had become the property of the Holy See and threatened the city with an interdict.[2] The Assisians, however, took no heed of the protest, and with the stones of the Rocca set themselves to build a strong wall round the city. They were determined to secure their independence.

[1] Ant. Cristofani, *Storie di Assisi* [ed. 1902], p. 49.

[2] Innocent III, *Regestorum*, Lib. I, LXXXVIII: "*Miravi Coginur*".

But with the withdrawal of the German overlordship, the Assisians were not to find peace, whatever else they might gain. They very soon discovered that they must either strengthen their own communal sovereignty or fall into a state of vassalage to their more powerful neighbour, Perugia—the city which stands so proudly upon a hill at the northern entrance to the Umbrian valleys, as though it were destined by nature to guard the land of Umbria against all unfriendly comers from the north and to keep vigilant watch over the valleys themselves. And Perugia was fully conscious of the dignity and power her position gave her amongst her Umbrian neighbours, nor was she without ambition to extend her sovereignty and maybe to reduce the valleys to practical vassalage. Already she had forced Arezzo to cede to her territories in the neighbourhood of Lake Thrasymene and had incorporated the district of Umbertide which commands the highways leading to Gubbio and Città di Castello in the most eastern Umbrian valley; and with these cities she had formed an alliance which made them little more than her retainers. She was quick to take advantage of the intestine quarrels of her neighbours, and by adopting the cause of one party, to bring all parties under her power. So when in the month of January, 1200, certain nobles in the territory of Assisi sought her protection against the Commune, Perugia eagerly made herself their advocate. That meant trouble for the Assisians, as they well knew; but being a stout-hearted people and themselves ambitious, they had no thought of submitting to Perugia's dictation. The original cause of the quarrel lay in the determination of the Commune of Assisi to strengthen the defences of the city and to force the feudal owners of lands, in their territories beyond the city walls, to submit to the common law of the Commune. But some of these nobles

refused to acknowledge the Commune's authority, and at this the citizens attacked their castles and razed them to the ground and by force took the lands and buildings which they required for the city's defence. Nor would they restore to the dissident nobles their property nor acknowledge their privileges when Perugia took up their cause. The feud dragged on for two years and culminated in a battle near the Ponte San Giovanni, which lies about midway between the two cities.[1] The Assisians were worsted in the fight, and amongst the prisoners taken that day by the Perugians, was the son of Pietro Bernardone, one of the most wealthy merchants of Assisi.

Thus Francis appears for the first time in the world's history, a figure in one of those petty wars which mark the struggle of mediaeval Italy for civic independence. He was at this time about twenty years of age,[2] and full of the zest of life. In appearance he was somewhat below middle height,

[1] Cristofani, *op. cit.* p. 57; W. Heywood, *A History of Perugia*, p. 53 *seq.*; Bonazzi, *Storia di Perugia*, I. p. 257.

[2] None of the legends give the date of Francis' birth; but it is evident from Thomas of Celano, that he was born in 1181 or 1182. Speaking of the death of Francis on 4 October, 1226, Celano adds: "*Twenty years being completed since he most perfectly adhered to Christ*" (I Celano, 88) and further on he again says that Francis died "*in the twentieth year of his conversion*" (I Celano, 119). Francis' conversion, therefore, took place in 1206 (cf. also, Leg. 3 Soc. 68; *Spec. Perfectionis*, cap. 124). But Celano further tells us that he was then "*nearly twenty-five years of age*" (I Celano, 2). Albert of Stadt gives the date of Francis' birth as 1182 (*Mon. Germ. Script.* Tom. XVI. p. 350), but his accuracy is not unimpeachable.

For chronology of Francis' life, cf. de Gubernatis, *Orbis Seraphicus*, Tom. I, p. 15 *seq.*; Panfilo da Magliano, *Storia compendiosa*, Tom. I, p. 5 *seq.*; P. Leo Patrem in *Miscellanea Francescana*, Tom. IX, fasc. 3; Boehmer Analekten, p. 123 *seq.*; Golubovich, *Biblioteca Bio-Biographica*, p. 85 *seq.*; F. Paschal Robinson in *Archivum Franc. Hist.* an. I, fasc. I, pp. 23-30; Montgomery Carmichael in *Franciscan Annals*, October, 1906.

slender of limb and of dark complexion. A general delicacy of feature—the straight well-shapen nose, the smooth brow, the hands rather tenuous with tapering fingers—betokened an idealist temperament; the rather thin lips were sensitive, but with indications of obstinacy, and in the dark eyes was a fearless candour and the possibilities of a boundless hot enthusiasm. The low forehead bespoke a mind intuitive rather than logical. He carried himself straightly and moved with a quick movement. His voice was clear and musical and strong.[1] He dressed sumptuously as one delighting in colour and a certain barbaric splendour. Among the gay city youth he had won a certain proud leadership. His vivacious and ready wit and tireless energy and exceeding good nature, made him a boon companion and general favourite; a certain bizarre fancy and originality[2] and a great daring, gained him a willing following of youths given to fantastic and unconventional frolic. At times one might detect behind the accustomed gaiety a latent seriousness of soul and a tendency to a gentle melancholy, and herein the philosopher might recognize something of the secret of his ascendency over this undisciplined youth. His popularity, however, was partly due to the lavishness with which he spent his money. His father, the wealthy merchant, gave him an unstinted allowance, and Francis never let money rest in his purse. It went as freely as it came. Friends and acquaintances of the family, astonished at his prodigality, would protest: "he might be a prince instead of the son of Pietro Bernardone".[3] But Pietro was of that mind that he

[1] I Celano, 83; cf. *ibid.* 73.

[2] Cf. Leg. 3 Soc. 2: "*In curiositate etiam tantum erat vanus quod aliquando in eodem indumento pannum valde carum panno vilissimo consui faciebat*". The civic feasts alluded to by the biographers have a similarity to those of the *Feste du Puy*, a fellowship of merchants well known in France and even in England towards the close of the thirteenth century. Cf. George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (Antiquary's Books), pp. 98-99

[3] 3 Soc. 2; I Celano, 2.

did not resent his son's lavishness, but rather rejoiced. He was himself ambitious, and perhaps saw in Francis' popularity with the city youth a foreshadowing of the day when this son of his would be high in the civic council, perhaps even consul or podestà: a laudable ambition at a time when the magistrate of a semi-independent city treated with princes and Papal legates in some sort of equality. But if this were Pietro's ambition, Francis himself looked beyond civic honours. Quite what he aspired to, he himself could not tell at this time. He dreamed of fame and honours, but without any definite idea how fame was to come to him. He lived as yet in a world of legendary romance and had visions of being a great leader of men and dazzling the world by his feats and compelling its homage and admiration.[1] The deference paid him now by the city youth was but a foretaste of that which was to come in the larger world where kings held court and heroes won fame. The city revels were to lead to revels of tourney and courts of love, where knight challenged knight, and poets sang: and whether in tourney or in court of love, Francis would meet all rivals. This idealism stood ever between Francis and his fellow-revellers. To them the evening frolic was but the excitement of the hour, and they tasted its coarseness and were besmirched by its sensuousness: to Francis it was a crude anticipation of the battle of life as he had learned it in the romances of chivalry. Perhaps it was this which kept him morally clean and wholesome amidst the dissipations in which he moved so freely. Where others came quickly to moral shipwreck, his temperament allowed him to assimilate only the subtler and more refined sensuousness of the scenes and not the coarser elements. He loved the song and parade, the adulation of the crowd, the movement and zest and the sense of leadership:

[1] Cf. 3 Soc. II, 5.

but from grosser evils a natural fastidiousness saved him. Coarseness was alien to his nature: he was dainty in his food; an obscene word made him silent.[1]

A temperament such as his could not have found a more congenial nursing-ground than Assisi in the years immediately following the overthrow of the German domination. The life of the city was quickened; the proud sense of freedom, chafed even by the mild suzerainty of Conrad of Lutzen,[2] was now set loose, and threw a glamour of patriotism even over the industrial activities of the city. There was a sense of building up the free commune as well as one's own house. One thing the German overlord had done for Assisi. He had given the citizens a period of comparative peace, during which the city had prospered materially, and the merchants had developed trade and gained wealth. The staple trade of Assisi, as of the other cities of central Italy, was in woollen stuffs, and the merchant in search of a market travelled wide and far. Thus Pietro Bernardone had a brisk business with France. And it was whilst he was on one of these journeys to the French market that Francis, his eldest son, was born. To commemorate the circumstance the delighted father on his return home dubbed the child "Francesco"—"the Frenchman"; by which pet-name and not by his baptismal

[1] In the early legends one finds apparently conflicting statements. Celano (I Celano, 1-3) depicts the youth of Francis as sullied by the vices of the time. S. Bonaventure (Leg. Maj. I), on the other hand, says: "Albeit in his youth Francis was reared in vanity . . . yet he went not astray among wanton youths after the lusts of the flesh". The contradiction is explained by the temperament of Francis. The Leg. 3 Soc. 3, suggests the solution: "*Erat tamen quasi naturaliter curialis*," etc.

[2] Conrad had even permitted the Assisians to join the league of the cities of Umbria and the Marches, for the defence of civic rights. Cf. Cristofani, *op. cit.* p. 49.

name, Giovanni, the child was henceforth called. On their journeys, the merchants not only did business; they gathered up and distributed the news of the world. They carried political and religious thought from one place to another along the route of their travel, and the news they brought was debated with that intensity of interest which belongs only to the more impassioned moments of life; for at no time have men lived more keenly and with a greater zest for ideas than did the citizens of those mediaeval cities. In every department of life, whether in politics, in intellect, or in religion, the towns were big with change and revolution. There was a restlessness abroad which none could escape: every town and city was more or less a radiating centre of critical discontent and revolutionary ideas; and nowhere was this spirit more active than in Italy, where each city in its semi-independence was a sort of microcosm typical of the Christian universe. When the men of Assisi stormed the Rocca and razed it to the ground and built a wall around their city and sought to subject the nobles to the civic authority, they were conscious that they were taking part in a world-wide revolution—the uprising of the city against the castle. In their streets and council chambers were discussed all the great questions agitating the peninsula and the Christian countries, whether secular or religious. Great as the power of the Church was, Italy at this time was seething with movements of Church reform, heretical and otherwise. There were the Cathari and Paterini,[1] who had swept like great sea waves over northern and central Italy, and set up conventicles in

[1] Cf. Gebhardt, *L'Italie Mystique*, p. 26 *seq.*: Felice Tocco, *L' Eresia nel Medio Evo*, p. 73 *seq.* The Paterini were in the first instance a movement supported by the Holy See; but Arnold of Brescia revived the movement in opposition to the Church.

all the more populous centres, defying the ecclesiastical powers. They preached a return to apostolic simplicity in religion, denounced the Church for its wealth and secular ambitions, scoffed at the clergy and rejected the sacramental system. They were the Puritans of the Middle Ages. Then side by side with the heretical movements there was a widespread feeling amongst the Catholics themselves, that all was not right in the Church. The orthodox discontent found expression in Lombardy and the North in the movement of the Humiliati, a society of lay-people who bound themselves to live by their labour, to eschew luxury in food and dress, to avoid taking part in war or feud and to serve the poor.[1] But the Humiliati, whilst they aroused the conscience, failed to touch the imagination.

Otherwise was it with the reform propaganda of the Cistercian Abbot Joachim in the South.[2] Joachim too preached poverty and humility, but unlike the other reformers he sought for renovation not by legal enactments and codes of conduct but by spiritual enlightenment. He was an Isaias bidding the people prepare for a renewed Kingdom of God by a clean conscience and prayer and the study of the Divine Word. When the spirit of the prophet first came upon him he had retired to a cave in Sicily and there had prepared himself for his mission by weeping over the sins of the people and imploring God's mercy. Then he had entered amongst the Cistercians at Sambucina as a lay-brother, had afterwards been ordained priest and elected abbot of the monastery. After a time he resigned the abbacy and secluded himself in the desert of Pietralata, where he wrote his prophetical books concerning the new reign of the Spirit.

[1] Cf. Tiraboschi, *Vetera Humiliatorum Monumenta*; Gebhardt, *op. cit.* p. 34.
[2] Cf. Felice Tocco, *op. cit.* p. 261 *seq.*; Gebhardt, *op. cit.* p. 49 *seq.*

Leaving the desert, he went about visiting the monasteries and preaching reform. Disciples flocked to him, and in 1189 he founded a new monastic community at Flore in Calabria, which drew to it the eyes of multitudes of people, both of the clergy and the laity, who soon came to regard it as the holy Sion whence would issue the long-sought renovation of the Christian world. Gentle and pitiful, Joachim preached a gospel of love towards God and man: to many he seemed a very image of the Christ. His prophecies sent a thrill through all Catholic Italy, like the stirring of a new day. Men lifted up their heads in hope and yet in fear; for the reign of the Divine Spirit about to come, was to be preceded by a sharp period of terror when the anti-Christ would appear on earth.[1]

The effect of Joachim's teaching was deep and lasting: for years after his death the people saw in political and religious events the fulfilment of his prophecies.[2] One of its immediate effects was the appearance of wandering devotees who went about calling the people to repentance, and uttering cryptic prophecies of the coming time. Such a one was found in Assisi about this very time: he went through the streets, crying out: *Pax et Bonum! Peace and Well-doing!*[3] In after times he was regarded as a precursor of that gospel of peace which Francis was to preach so successfully. The Franciscan movement was indeed cradled in the expectancy aroused by the Joachimite prophecies. Another indication

[1] This period of the anti-Christ was to begin, according to Joachim, in 1199. Cf. Felice Tocco, *op. cit.* p. 290, n. 1.

[2] Thus Frederick II was regarded by many Catholics as the anti-Christ; whilst on the other hand his partisans gave him almost divine honours, and likened him to Jesus Christ. *Cf.* Huillard Bréholles, *Hist. diplomat*, iv. p. 378; *Vie de P. de la Vigne*, Pièces Justificatives, No. 107 *et passim.*

[3] 3 Soc. 26.

how Assisi was affected by the general religious restlessness was the election of the heretic, Giraldo di Gilberto, in 1203, to the chief magistracy, and his remaining in office in spite of the protests of the Holy See.[1]

That Francis was conversant with all these movements as they were reflected in the life of his native city, there can be no doubt. In the narrow circle of a mediaeval commune, the son of a wealthy merchant, and partner in his father's trade, could not be ignorant of the quick forces of public opinion which carried men onwards so irresistibly. Neither can it be doubted that he took his part right willingly in the struggle for civic independence. But the sentiment which drew him out to fight against Perugia was hardly a reflective one but rather a blind instinct of loyalty and a natural love of adventure. He was as yet of that youthful cast of thought which values things in proportion to their nearness to one's personal concerns. To him the deep politics of the city counsellors would seem trivial compared with the youthful revels in which he found some semblance of his dream of life. As to the disputes between Catholics and Paterini and such like, they would seem to him whom they did not concern, mere waste of words and temper: if he gave serious thought to the matter at all, he would probably condemn all heretics as meddlers in the affairs of other men or as scarecrows at the feast. He was, in a word, too much wrapt up in his own dreams to be an ardent politician or religious disputant. In fact, he never quite descended from his world of dream even in after life, and was apt to be impatient of meddlers and heretics to the end. As to the coming of anti-Christ and the promised new revelation of the Spirit, these things might have impressed him had they not been so strange to his

[1] Cristofani, *op. cit.* p. 68.

outlook on life. He loved the world as it was: things might not be all as they should be, but there was great joy to be found there, and he kept close to the joy and shrank instinctively from the sight of the sorrow as from some unexplained mystery which would be troublesome if peered into.[1]

But amidst all the confusion of voices which filled the public places, there was one voice to which the young Francis listened with a joyous content, the voice of the troubadour. Twenty years before the birth of Francis the singing poets of Provence had begun to invade Italy, drawn thither by the stir of life and freedom. They came singing aloud the joys and sorrows of youth and the glory of chivalry. Gaily or pathetically they lifted their voices in praise of love or adventure, passing their fingers deftly and thrillingly over the varied strings of human emotion. Their songs, too, had the consistency of a faith however lightly they might be sung. Passionately they recited the glory of courage and endurance; but always their heroes spent themselves for some high cause, either for the defence of the Christian faith or for the succouring of the weak or the oppressed. Or else they sang of love, of love sublimated by sacrifice and worship:[2] for whether they sang of battle or adventure or of love, a persistent note in their harmonies was that of personal devotion and unselfish endurance for the sake of the good cause or the beloved. Their heroes were chosen from folk-lore and legend. Arthur and his Round Table, Charlemagne and his puissant paladins, supplied them with inspiring themes. So with his

[1] *Cf. Testamentum S. F.*: "*Nimis mihi videbatur amarum videre leprosos*".

[2] Cf. M. Fauriel, *Dante et les Origines de la Langue et de la Litterature Italiennes*, p. 279 *seq.*; cf. Karl Bartsch, *Chrestomathie Provençale*: Ern. Monaci, *Testi antichi provenziali*.

romance of chivalry and his songs of love the minstrel from Provence visited the courts of the Italian nobles,[1] whence he sent forth a haunting voice which set the heart of youth astir and was as a fresh breeze amidst the pessimism which had so long depressed the vitality of the peninsula.

Now it may seem a strange thing that this merchant's son, whom in after years men would come to regard as a patron saint of democracy, should have had his mind and character formed by the romance of chivalry and the love-song of the troubadour. Yet so it was in fact. He drew the form into which his ambition was cast, out of the tales of knight-errantry and knightly adventure, and the love-song fostered his native instinct for the perfect lover. By temperament he had but little taste for book-knowledge; he loved better the life of action and the free air: but he learned eagerly the tales of the Round Table and of Roland and Oliver the great paladins.[2] He had no doubt that these heroes were such as the minstrels pictured them; he believed that their peers might be found again and he amongst them. In truth, were not valiant knights fighting for the faith and the right and performing prodigies of valour in the Eastern lands, and even in the Southern provinces of Italy, where the Germans were warring against the Church? So he dreamed

[1] The most famous Provençal singers such as Bernard de Ventadour, Cadenet, Raimbaut de Vaquerras, Pierre Vidal, were frequently in Italy about the end of the twelfth century. Fauriel, *op. cit.* p. 257.

[2] Vide *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 4 and 72; also F. Paschal Robinson, *The Golden Sayings of Brother Giles*, p. 61. The Latin legends of Arthur and his knights were already published in Italy about the end of the twelfth century; as well as the Provençal versions of the romances of Arthur and Charlemagne. Cf. Fauriel, *op. cit.* I, p. 286. The influence of the troubadour's love-song is very marked in early Franciscan literature, notably in the religious songs of Jacopone da Todi; but Francis seems to have drawn his inspiration more from the chivalric romances.

his dream, whilst men waged heated controversy over Church reform and the prophets foretold world-disaster and the coming of the new life.

To the end of his days this dream of romantic chivalry will remain with Francis and be the chief secular influence in the shaping of his story. He will outgrow his early crude ambitions of secular achievement and change his ultimate purpose and take to himself other weapons of combat and extend his vision of life: but to the last he will always think of himself as a knight-errant, and the governing law of his life will be the knightly code of fearless courage, worshipful love and gentle courtesy. To the end, too, he will be a singer of song and carry with him the poet's sensitive feeling for the sunshine and shadows of life. Always he will feel a knightly scorn for compromise and the by-ways of diplomacy; he will be quick to obey the call of the quest and will deem disloyalty the blackest of sins.

Some will have it that his romantic temperament was due to his mother's blood; for they say the Lady Pica, the wife of Pietro Bernardone, was of gentle birth and Provençal origin: but of this there is no certain proof.[1] Yet there can be little

[1] The early legends tell us nothing concerning the origin of Francis' mother. The supposition of her Provençal origin may have arisen from the fact that Francis spoke the French tongue (cf. I Celano, 16; II Celano, 13, 127; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 93) but he may have learned this as part of the education of a merchant's son, who would have need to carry on trade with France. As to the tradition that Pica was of noble birth, a contemporary legal document published by Cristofani, *op. cit.* pp. 50-51, styles her *Domina Pica;* from which M. Sabatier (*Vie de S. F.* p. 8, n. 2) deduces that she must have been of noble origin. But in Southern Europe the more wealthy merchants at this time claimed equality of rank with the nobles. Cf. Fauriel, *Preuves de l'histoire du Languedoc*, III. p. 607. Nothing is really known concerning the family-origins of Francis. According to a document discovered by Bishop Spader in the eighteenth century, the Bernardoni migrated to

doubt of her saving influence in the formative period of Francis' character. Between mother and son there was that close understanding sympathy which is more often felt as an atmosphere rather than as defined action; whose influence therefore is the more subtle and penetrating, whether for restraint or for direction. It was Pica who, when her neighbours were commenting upon Francis' princely manners and ambitions, remarked to their amazement: "I will tell you how this son of mine will turn out; he will become a son of God".[1] In her fond watchfulness she had seen how he would never refuse an alms to a beggar and how whenever the name of God was uttered in his presence he grew reverent and worshipful.[2] And out of the experience of her own soul, perhaps, she read the significance of these signs. So whilst his father was hugging his own forecast of his son's future position in the Commune and begrudging no money that would help him to secure the highest place; and whilst friends and neighbours were divided in opinion, some regarding him as a spendthrift and wastrel and others as a young man with a well-formed ambition and assured success, the Lady Pica held in her heart some dim vision in which knightly adventure was interwoven with saintship and the spirit of the troubadour sang its songs in heaven. And who shall say how far the mother's dream determined the life-story of her son?

Assisi from Lucca. Cf. P. Marcellino da Civezza, *San Francesco ornando dai Moriconi di Lucca.*

[1] II Celano, 3. Further on we shall find Pica encouraging Francis in his religious adventure.

[2] Leg. Maj. I. Cf. Leg. 3 Soc. 9.

CHAPTER II.

FRANCIS DREAMS OF GLORY AND FAME.

After the battle of Ponte San Giovanni, Francis, as we have said, was lodged in prison.[1]

Now to the traveller there is no city in Umbria of such a queenly majesty as Perugia. Built upon a hill-top at the northern entrance to all the Umbrian valleys, it has a proud beauty of outline which holds the eye, and compels a sort of rapturous worship until you enter within the city, and then there is a certain grimness in its massive public buildings, instinct with beauty though they are, which indicates still that almost brutal ambition for power which made Perugia, in the heyday of its glory, feared and hated by its neighbours. The Palazzo dei Priori, the symbol of that strange commingling of brutal strength with exquisite artistic feeling, was not yet built in Francis' time, but the spirit which demanded it of the builders was there. Perugia had humbled Assisi, yet not so decisively as to bring the weaker city to an unconditional surrender, and she was wary enough not to waste her strength ineffectively. Negotiations followed but dragged somewhat slowly, and meanwhile the prisoners were kept in unpitying confinement for the greater part of a year.

[1] Being the son of a wealthy citizen he was not put with the common soldiery but with the nobles.—3 Soc. 4.

Francis, it would seem, took his imprisonment light-heartedly enough. He sang and made merry though his fellow-captives grew depressed and irritable. They were chafing at the narrow confinement; he was dreaming his dream of chivalry. To him this affray of the Ponte San Giovanni with its untoward consequence, was the beginning of real life: for battle and captivity were equally incidents in the knightly adventure upon which he had set his heart. Those around him, not seeing the light which made his day, thought him deficient in sanity. "Surely," said one of them, "you are mad that you can be merry in prison." "Would you know why I am merry?" retorted Francis. "I see the day when all the world will bow in homage before me."[1] His good-nature, too, was irrepressible. There was amongst them a knight of so sour and bitter a temper, that his fellow-prisoners entirely avoided his company, all except Francis, who attached himself to the outcast and by kindness won him to more genial ways and finally healed the breach between him and his fellows.[2] After about a year the prisoners were set free.[3] But the long confinement and enforced inaction had told upon the health of Francis, and after his return home an attack of fever was nearly the end of his earth-story; though as it happened it proved

[1] 3 Socii, 4; II Celano, 4. [2] *ibid.*

[3] Leo Patrem (*Misc. Franc.* Vol. IX. fasc. 3, p. 84) disputes the date 1203 given by Ant. Cristofani for the signing of peace between Perugia and Assisi, and argues for 1202. But according to *Bellezze della Regia Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria*, Vol. VIII, pp. 140-142, peace was signed on August 31, 1205. If this date be correct then Francis must have been set free several years before the definite conclusion of peace, at least if the evidence of 3 Soc. is accepted. It was announced in 1910 that the original document of the peace-treaty was discovered in the municipal library of Perugia, but my repeated efforts to obtain a copy of it have been fruitless.

instead to be its real beginning. For it was then as he lay during long weeks upon his sick bed, that there came to Francis the first troublous intimations of a life other than that of which he had hitherto dreamed, a life dedicated to God and the quest of eternal things.[1] They were but as the sound of the far-off sea-waves to one who has never yet seen the ocean; he could not tell with any distinctness their demand, but they brought a trouble to his thoughts and heart, which was to remain there till the demand was fully known and accepted. That was not to be yet. With convalescence the old dream of adventure and fame came back and the old eager joy in the dreamland which his fancy made of the earth. The first disillusionment came when he took his first walk abroad. He went out by one of the city gates, his heart hungering for a sight of the fair earth. There he stood leaning upon a stick and gazing wistfully upon the wide valley where on a sunny day the scintillating haze envelops the hills and the plain in a mystic glory, and the golden towns, dotted along the hillsides, look farther off than they really are, and the white course of the river winds across the lowland. And for the first time the living earth failed him. To his call there came no response: as well might he have been within the walls of his sick-room. "The beauty of the fields, the delight of the vineyards and all that is fair to the eye, could in no way gladden him," says Thomas of Celano; "wherefore he was amazed at the change which had so suddenly come upon him and thought them most foolish who could love these things."[2]

But movement and fresh air in time brought back his strength and he became restless for action. The events of the affray with Perugia and the test of sickness had deepened

[1] I Celano, 3; Leg. Maj. I. 2. [2] I Celano, 3.

his character. He was no longer content with the life of youth; he must enter into the life of men.

And the opportunity at length came.[1] Since 1198 all Italy had been watching the struggle which was being waged between the Pope and the Germans for the regency of the Two Sicilies. At first the war had gone against the Papal forces; but the tide had turned with the advent in 1202 of Walter de Brienne, Prince of Taranto, to whom Innocent III had entrusted his cause. It was, however, a desperate conflict, waged by brave and fearless leaders on both sides. To Provençal singers Walter de Brienne was more than a valiant soldier; he was a hero fighting for the Church and Italian liberty against the hated German.[2] Stirred by the troubadours' song, soldiers from all parts of Italy flocked to the Norman's banner, partly for the glory of the adventure, partly for the material gain which was sure to accrue to a successful army; and some of them had already gained renown and the worship of the aspirants for knightly honours.

Francis' thoughts must often have turned to the southern battlefields, as he dreamed of the realization of his romance of chivalry. The setting out of a certain unnamed noble of Assisi to join the Papal army in Apulia now quickened his decision.

He too would go to the war and, God willing, gain his knighthood in the following of a Count Gentile: a captain,

[1] *Post paucos vero annos*—"after a few years," says the Legend of the Three Companions, in introducing the story of the journey to Apulia, after relating the incident of Francis' imprisonment. It was probably in 1205 that the events which follow took place.

[2] The Southern Italians, however, resented being ruled by a foreigner, for Walter de Brienne was appointed not only commander of the forces, but Justiciar of Apulia. Cf. A. Luchaire, *Innocent III. Rome et l'Italie*, p. 190 *seq.*

doubtless, of some fame, though his exploits are not mentioned by Francis' biographers.[1] Now having determined upon his course, Francis set about equipping himself in a fashion befitting the magnificence of his ambition; so that his array outshone in splendour that of his noble companion in arms though he too was a man of wealth and fashion.[2]

The day of departure was at hand and Francis was already delighting in the glory of his newly bought equipment, when he happened to fall in with a knight whose shabby dress betokened a straitened poverty. And this to Francis seemed a great shame, that one who belonged to so high a profession should be clothed so meanly. Straightway he made over his own gorgeous mantle and tunic and all his costly apparel to the poor knight.[3]

Full of the glory of his coming adventures Francis that evening retired to rest, and as he slept he dreamed a sweet dream. Some one called him by his name and taking him, led him to a fair palace, set about with knightly arms, the residence of a beautiful bride; and as he was gazing in admiration and wondering to whom this palace belonged, his guide told him that it was for him and his followers.[4] Francis awoke, convinced that the dream was an indication of his

[1] The Leg. 3 Soc. says expressly that the Count was named Gentile, from whom Francis desired to receive knighthood. Lemonnier and Jörgensen suppose that the name Gentile was merely a name of honour, and that Walter de Brienne himself is to be understood. But there were several Counts Gentile, whose names are recorded in contemporary documents; one of them, Count Gentile of Manapelli, was instrumental in defeating the Germans at Palermo in July, 1200. Cf. P. Sabatier, *Vie de S. F.* p. 19, n. 2.

[2] I Celano, 4. [3] II Celano, 5; 3 Soc. 6; *Leg. Maj.* I. 2.

[4] 3 Soc. 5; I Celano, 5; II Celano, 6; *Leg. Maj.* I. 3. Celano in his *Legenda Prima* says Francis saw his father's house filled with arms; but in *Legenda Secunda* he gives the same description as in 3 Socii. St. Bonaventure speaks of "a fair palace," but does not allude to the beautiful bride.

destiny, and such was his manifest happiness that his friends were curious to know what new fortune had come to him. Francis replied: "I know of a surety that I shall become a great prince".[1] So in the joy of his dream he set out on his way to Apulia. He came the first evening to the city of Spoleto at the southern end of the valley, where the mountains take a bend towards the west: and there he put up for the night. Again the mysterious voice came to him; but now he was but half asleep. And as he listened intently he heard: "Francis, whom is it better to serve, the lord or the servant?" And he wonderingly replied: "Surely it is better to serve the lord". "Why then," asked the voice, "dost thou make a lord of the servant?" Suddenly the light entered his soul and he replied humbly: "Lord, what dost Thou wish me to do?" "Return," said the voice, "to the land of thy birth and there it will be told thee what thou shalt do: for it may behove thee to give another meaning to thy dream."

Thoroughly awake, Francis lay pondering upon what had happened to him. He had no doubt now that these voices were akin to those troubling thoughts which had come to him in his sickness; and they were too real to be honestly disregarded. Sobered and serious, he arose at daybreak and without delay got on his horse and rode back to Assisi. He had put his dream of secular glory behind him. As to the future he had no plans: he only knew that he must wait upon the word which was to come to him and make all things clear. That was all he was conscious of just now; and with a magnificent simplicity of soul, he set himself to wait. There was no sadness in his returning: the glamour of yesterday had given place to a new serenity and a new

[1] 3 Soc. 5.

GATEWAY, ASSISI
(Looking towards Perugia)

joy; he had not yet found his heart's desire, but he knew it would come to him in the mysterious future before which he was to wait.[1]

It bears witness to the sanity of Francis' mind that he was willing to wait and that he attempted no sudden ill-considered break with the life he had hitherto been living. Upon his return he took up the threads of the old life where he had left them. He went back to his father's business, though with no greater enthusiasm than he had hitherto shown; he took his place again amongst the youths of the city, who at once elected him captain of the revel, moved thereto, as the old chronicler reminds us, by the prodigality with which he had always contributed to their feasts.[2] But the revel gave him no longer the whole-hearted simple pleasure of a former day.

He presided at the banquets his own purse provided, at which the fine city youths over-ate themselves and drank too much; and when they could eat and drink no more and rose up and went forth into the streets singing riotously, Francis must lead the way with the wand of leadership in his hand, as the custom was.[3] Meanwhile in all the byways of the city was the ill-fed, naked crowd whose excitement was to witness the procession of the gorgeously-clad, gluttonous sons of noble and merchant: and Francis since his return from Spoleto was daily becoming conscious of the contrast between the life of these poor beggars and that of his own people. The sight of a beggar would now set struggling emotions which were a mystery to himself. More and more as the weeks went by, he felt himself becoming a stranger

[1] 3 Soc. 6; II Celano, 6; *Leg. Maj.* I. 3. [2] II Celano, 7.

[3] *ibid.* Celano evidently describes these civic carousals from personal knowledge or experience.

amongst his friends. He would still move amongst them exchanging witticisms and pleasantries; he would still lead off the song and sit at the feast: but his heart was not in it all as it used to be. Oftentimes he sat at the board in an abstracted mood, and at the head of the riotous procession would walk as one in deep thought until aroused by some rude pleasantry from his companions. As time went on these abstracted moods became more prolonged and intent; he would even at times be as one unable to move or speak, so rapt was he in his own thoughts of the sweet mystery which was upon him. The revellers, noting these things, had a ready explanation: Francis must be in love. One day when he had fallen behind in one of his silent moods, his companions turned back and taxed him with his delinquency. "Art thou in love, Francis?" they cried; "hast found a maiden to be thy wife, that thou must be always thinking of her charms and beauty?" Francis, aroused from his abstraction, replied with unexpected seriousness: "Yea, in truth I am thinking of taking a wife more noble and beautiful and richer than any ye have ever seen". At which they laughed a coarse incredulous laugh. But Francis was thinking of the bride of his dream who had come to figure in his thoughts for the new life into which he was peering, and whom he afterwards came to know as the Lady Poverty.[1] It was his first confession of his love even to himself; and from that moment, with a lover's humility, he began to wax worthless in his own eyes and to think bitterly of the wasted years, for so they seemed now, which had kept him from knowing his heart's desire.

He became thenceforth even more silent and thoughtful and more and more sensitive to the spiritual world. Often he

[1] 3 Soc. 7 and 13; I Celano, 7.

would withdraw from the society of his fellows and steal out of the city to be alone and to pray. He was yet shy of manifesting to others his secret; but the distaste for the old life was becoming too much for him. Yet he was of that nature which instinctively seeks companionship and a certain comprehending sympathy, and this need drew him frequently into visiting the poor. He no longer waited for them to come seeking an alms; he now sought them out, always taking with him money or food to relieve their needs, yet taking something even more precious, the sympathy of a soul itself lonely and in need. For in these months of spiritual travail he was living in a great loneliness. There was but one friend in the city, a young man about his own age, to whom he could bring himself to speak of the things which had come into his life: and even to him he could speak only shyly and in parables, telling him that he had discovered a treasure of great price and was seeking how to obtain possession of it. Sometimes he would take his friend with him on his walks outside the city and in his enigmatic way unbosom his searching thoughts. They gradually came to directing their steps to an ancient Etruscan tomb some distance off and in a lonely place. There Francis would bid his friend remain outside whilst he himself went in to pray. Those visits to the ancient tomb were Francis' most intimate moments with God and his own soul. His friend, waiting outside, heard him at times crying aloud in his southern fashion for very anguish of soul: it was when the soul of Francis was being riven by a divine light which revealed him to himself and brought him to judgment, face to face with his destiny. At such moments he was in an agony of new desire and conscious helplessness. To add to his trial, his over-strained nerves would at times create imaginative horrors out of his moral

fears. He saw himself becoming deformed, even as some of the poor beggars in the city, at the sight of whom he had always shrunk back with horror. He met such suggestions with pleading prayer and did not desist till he had found strength and comfort. But when he came out again into the sunlight his countenance would be haggard and drawn because of the pain he had suffered. One clear thought was gradually shaping itself amidst the ferment of spirit: he must abandon his accustomed comfort and luxury and ambition and go forth like Abraham of old amongst a strange people. That insistent calling was beating upon his spiritual sense; it drew him with mysterious persuasion; yet did he still hold back as one whose bonds are not yet broken, whose vision is not clear.[1] Who the friend was who stood by him in these difficult days and comforted him with a discreet sympathy, we know not. Some have surmised that it was that Elias who afterwards became Minister-General of the Franciscan Order and the anti-type of Francis in Franciscan legend.[2] Were it so we could easily understand Francis' attachment to Elias in the later days when this friend became to him the cause of many anxious hours. It is, however, only a fanciful surmise. Whoever he was, whether Elias or another, may his memory be blessed for the sake of those first difficult days.

In his perplexity Francis bethought him to undertake a pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles. Year by year pilgrims trod the white roads leading to Rome, carrying with them their miseries or fears or desires to the heavenly ap-

[1] Cf. 3 Soc. 8; I Celano, 6; II Celano 9.

[2] P. Sabatier, *Vie de S. F.* p. 22. The supposition, however, is unlikely. Had Elias been Francis' first friend Celano would certainly have mentioned the fact in his *Legenda Prima* in which he constantly extols the merits of Elias.

pointed shepherds of Christ's flock, whose bodies lay on the Vatican Hill.

Francis therefore joined the pilgrimage, having no doubt that the apostles would give him comfort and direction. He took with him rich offerings for the shrine such as in his inexperience he thought all wealthy pilgrims took; and great was his surprise and pain when he noticed, during his stay in the city, how meagre were their offerings. To him it seemed not merely a lack of generosity but a sort of treason thus to treat the chief pastors of souls. With a feeling of revulsion Francis turned from the niggardly pilgrims to the importunate beggars who crowded about the doors of the basilica, and literally poured into their outstretched hands his ready alms. Beggars were having a strange fascination for him of late. He was beginning to feel a new sense of freedom in their presence. Suddenly one day as he approached St. Peter's a quick resolve took possession of him. He would himself become a beggar for the day and learn by experience what the life must be. It would be more easily done here amongst a crowd of strangers: had he been at home he would have shrunk from the ridicule of his own class, for he was not yet master of himself. Oftentimes in the past months he had felt himself a coward and had sought the company of the poor by stealth, being still held by the conventions of his class.

Here in Rome a lesser boldness was needed. Moreover, the pilgrimage and the freshness of thought which comes of a widening world—and the journey to Rome was his first glimpse of the great world beyond his native province—was giving him a grip of his own soul, bringing the issues of his mental struggle into greater clearness. Straightway he took a beggar aside and for a consideration obtained the loan of

his clothes: and all that day he stood outside St. Peter's, clad as a beggar, asking alms of those who passed in and out. With the illusion of a strong imagination he was for the time a veritable beggar, waiting upon another's goodwill for bread and the courtesy of life, and sharing with his companions at the door their satisfactions and rebuffs.[1] In the evening he became again the son of Pietro Bernardone the rich merchant; but for the day he had been of the brotherhood of beggars, and as he went to his lodgings that night he felt that he had wandered further away from his father's house and found a new tie of kinship; and he felt also that exaltation of spirit which comes to a man when he has pitted his strength against his weakness or diffidence and come forth the victor: for his fastidiousness had kicked against the unseemly rags, and the feeling for his own class still had a subtle power over him.[2]

On his return to Assisi he carried with him this new feeling of kinship with the poor. He was no longer content to go out and bestow an alms in secret: that now would have been a disloyalty. In some way he must proclaim his new fellowship. Fortunately his father was absent from home, probably on one of his long journeys to France; else might Francis' story have moved more quickly than it did at this period, or at least with less idyllic grace. But Francis could count upon his mother's tolerant sympathies. One day, to her surprise, she found the table loaded with bread and meat as for a large company. On asking whom the guests might be, Francis replied that it was a feast for the hungry. Then taking the food from the table he distributed it to the poor at the door. It was more neighbourly thus to feed them from his own table.

[1] II Celano, 8; 3 Soc. 10; *Leg. Maj.* I. 6. [2] Cf. II Celano, 13.

But the day of days came to him out in the plain. He had been riding and was returning to the city when a leper stood in his way, supplicating an alms. At the sight of his loathsome disfigurement the very soul of Francis sickened, as it did in the presence of all ugly disease. At an earlier time he would have flung out his alms and passed quickly on. But to-day a great wave of pity swept over him, and would not let him pass on. He reined in his horse and dismounted, and as he courteously placed his alms in the beggar's hand, he took the hand and kissed it. Then clasping the leper in his arms, he himself received from the leper the kiss of peace. From that moment Francis never again looked back upon the old ways: in the leper's embrace he plighted his troth to the new life in which poverty and suffering were lords demanding his liege service. He had not yet found the Lady Poverty, but he had entered her domain and become a servant of her people: and for the present he was at peace.

In his gratitude he now looked upon the lepers as his peculiar charge: he visited their settlements and brought them alms; and always as he gave his alms he kissed their hands.[1]

[1] 3 Soc. 11; II Celano, 9; *Leg. Maj.* I. 5. Cf. *Testamentum S. Franc.* in *Seraph. Legisl. Textus Originales* (Quaracchi), p. 265.

CHAPTER III.

HOW FRANCIS FOUND THE LADY POVERTY.

Now all this while since that night of the mysterious voice at Spoleto, many months ago, Francis regarded himself as waiting upon the good-will of his Lord, Jesus Christ; and whatever happened to him apart from his own seeking (and he sought but little of his own will these days), he took as coming from the Divine Will. He doubted not that Christ Himself had sent the leper across his path and had put it into his heart to embrace the leper as he did and thus find the dedicated life. There was yet a period of probation to be gone through before he would be fully initiated; of that he was fully aware; but he was happy with "a sweetness of soul and body" at being enrolled amongst his Lord's servitors.[1] His most imperious feeling now was one of intense loyalty to his Divine Master, which went with a shy worship of that new mystery of life which was gradually being revealed to him in his intercourse with the poor and suffering. He recognized clearly that this new life was the gift of the Lord, and that it must be gained in His service: it was in fact the kingdom which his Lord shared with His followers.

[1] Vide *Testamentum S. Franc.*: "The Lord Himself gave to me, Brother Francis, thus to begin to do penance. . . . The Lord Himself led me amongst them [the lepers]—and I showed mercy to them: and when I left them what had seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of body and soul."

Through all this kingdom, as he was coming to know it, he saw the resplendent figure of the Lord Christ reflected in all: the beggar and the leper were touched with His majesty, and the earth they dwelt on, acquired a new sanctity because this glory of the Christ was upon them. And that was the singular thing about Francis' turning towards religion: it did not raise a barrier between him and the earth, but the earth itself became transformed in his sight and gave him a new joy. In earlier days he had regarded it with a certain eager reverence as the scene and circumstance of high chivalry: now he looked upon it with even greater reverence because of this new life revealed in it, and found in it an even greater joy. Such an attitude of mind would hardly have been tolerated by the professional religious reformers who demanded an utter negation of present joy and held out as a reward some distant joy in another world. Instinctively Francis avoided their counsels: their theories had no relation to the realities into which he had been caught up. Occasionally in moments of acute doubt, he sought advice from the bishop, and came away strengthened and comforted.[1] Doubtless the bishop thought it would all end in Francis becoming a monk or entering the priesthood: but whatever he thought, he was sympathetic and helpful and did not exert any undue pressure to determine the course of Francis' life. But for the most part Francis kept his own counsel: yet humbly and without deliberate contradiction of other people's ways, being wholly wrapt up in the mystery of his own life and in the expectancy

[1] Cf. 3 Soc. 10; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 10. Francis in the *Spec. Perfect*, cites as one reason of his great reverence for bishops, the kindness shown him by the bishop of Assisi "*from the beginning of my conversion*". Cf. *Acta SS.* Octob. II. p. 584. Bishop Guido was elected in 1204. Cf. Ughelli, *Italia Sacra*, I, p. 479, XV.

of his Lord's commands. This simplicity of soul was probably the safeguard of his truthfulness and sincerity, as well as the evidence.

So we come to those final stages by which Francis reached his great decision. He was walking one day near the little church of San Damiano which stands on the slope of the hill outside the city walls as you follow the Via Francesca [1] looking towards Spello. The church was in a crumbling condition; [2] no one seemed to have a care for it, and seeing this, Francis' sense of reverence was troubled; yet at the same time he felt strangely drawn to enter in. He followed the impulse and went and prayed before the altar. Suddenly he heard a voice speaking as it seemed to him from the crucifix. "Francis," it said, "go and repair my church which as thou seest is wholly a ruin." At hearing the voice Francis was at first startled and terrified; then he became conscious that it was his Lord who spoke to him; and for a while he could neither speak nor move, but was as one lost to the things of sense: Jesus Christ, for whose word he had waited, had spoken. But he remembered that service was demanded of him and roused himself; in abashed astonishment he replied: "Gladly, Lord, will I repair it". And then he felt a marvellous love for the crucified Christ take possession of him,

[1] The Via Francesca was one of the principal roads on the way between San Damiano and the Portiuncula, in the time of St. Francis. To-day it is a mere narrow path. The name, it may be remarked, was not called after St. Francis; it existed before his day.

[2] According to Thode, *Saint François d'Assise et l'Art Italien*, II. p. 13, it was already in existence in 1030. It was one of those small churches, a nave without aisles, and rudely built of stone, which abound even to-day in Italy. San Damiano still exists in almost primitive simplicity, but a side chapel was built in the seventeenth century to accommodate the famous crucifix carved by Fra Innocenzio di Palermo.

such a love as he had never felt before; and he knew that for the sake of Him, he would willingly perform any service even to the death.

He rose from his knees and went out of the church and found the priest who served it, sitting near by; and he offered him a large sum of money, saying: "I pray thee, signore, to buy oil and keep a lamp always burning before the Crucified: and when this money is all expended, I will give thee more" Then he went on his way, lifted above himself and seeing Christ crucified, and hearing the Voice, and oblivious to all else: for the crucifix had become a Living Thing to his spirit, and the centre of all living things. His Lord—the Master of his life and service—was the Crucified, and He had made Himself known in that ruined church: and Francis was to repair the church. The facts shone with exuberant, insistent vitality. The esquire of the Crucified asked no questions, and formed no argument: his response was entire obedience and love. But that evening when Francis went back to the city, he too was already in some wise crucified in spirit, so wholly had he given his heart to his liege-lord.[1]

Without delay he set about his new service. He got together a goodly stock of stuffs from his father's store, and mounting his horse, having first made the sign of the cross, he set off for Foligno, the busy city in the plain, where merchandise would always find a ready sale; and there he sold not only the stuffs but also the horse, and then walked back the ten miles to Assisi, carrying the money he had gained; and this he brought at once to the priest at San Damiano. Bending low, he kissed the priest's hand and offered him the money for the repairing of the church, and begged, as a favour, that he might be allowed to dwell with him at San Damiano;

[1] II Celano, 10; 3 Soc. 13, 14; *Leg. Maj.* I, 5.

for he was eager to abide where his service was demanded, and he had now no stomach for life in his father's house. The priest was wholly unprepared for the turn events had taken; and being a prudent man, but withal kindly, he refused to accept so large a sum of money, but consented to Francis remaining with him. Possibly the priest had heard talk about Francis' strange behaviour since his return from the pilgrimage to Rome, and was doubtful as to how it would all end: possibly he did not see the use of expending so much money on a crumbling way-side church, and preferred to spend his days in peace. At any rate, Francis could not prevail upon him to take the money: so he flung it into a window sill in the church and left it there.[1] He did not go home but took up his abode there and then with the priest.

By this time, however, his father had returned to Assisi, and becoming alarmed at his son's absence, after a few days he set about making inquiries and at length learned the whole story of the sales at Foligno and how his son was now turned acolyte or hermit at San Damiano. And at that Pietro Bernardone was beside himself with sorrow and anger. Calling together a party of his friends he set out to put an end to this foolery. But some one of the household had already warned Francis, and when Pietro arrived at the little sanctuary, his son had gone, no one knew whither.

Francis, you see, was not yet a perfect hero. He had no thought of surrendering before the violence of his father nor of going back upon his plighted fealty to the Crucified who had called him; but he was not yet man enough to stand his ground and meet the assault. He shrank before the ridicule which he knew would be heaped upon him, and equally before the violence, which in filial reverence and in conscience

[1] I Celano, 8-9; II Celano, 11; 3 Soc. 16; *Leg. Maj.* II. 1.

he could not return; and even more than from the certain violence, he shrank from his father's curse which he knew would surely fall upon him if he held out: and there is nothing an Italian dreads more even to-day than the parental curse. But besides all this he was yet shy of confessing before the world this new loyalty which possessed him: even as every honest man is shy of confessing his heart's love. He was but a neophyte and was lacking yet the full strength and confidence of a man. From his first settling down at San Damiano he had dreaded his father's coming and had bethought him of a cave into which he might safely retreat, and thither he had fled when the warning came: and there he remained in hiding for a whole month, so full of terror that he hardly ever ventured out into the sunlight. Food was brought to him secretly by the only friend who knew the place of his retreat.

These days, however, were not without a joy of their own. In the dark solitude he held constant communion of soul with his Divine Lord: new light poured into his mind and strength into his heart; at times he would shrink into himself as he thought of the stormy trouble awaiting him; at other times he was exalted with his newly-found happiness. But the day came when he felt it too great an indignity to the Lord he served, thus to lurk in dark corners for the fear of men. No true knight would shirk the combat nor refrain from open confession of his allegiance. He must live his life in the open and bear witness to his Lord, and if needs be, suffer in the doing. So one day, casting all care for himself upon the Lord he served, he issued forth from his cave and appeared in the streets of Assisi. He was much changed in appearance from the gay youth of the past. The mental struggle he had gone through and the fastings and bodily

discomforts, had made him thin and emaciated and given his face a deep pallor as of a corpse. The people meeting him were shocked: they thought he must verily have gone mad; and with the cruelty which the curious often have, they taunted him upon his madness and jeered at him. And as Francis, taking it all in the spirit of the Crucified, made no spirited retort, the gathering crowd took courage and flung mud and stones at him. Still no sign of anger escaped him. In truth he was feeling a curious gladness in this baptism of fire, all the more conscious because of the fears which had held him back this month past.

But Assisi is but a small city and the news of his son's reappearance and the reception he was getting, swiftly reached the ears of Pietro Bernardone, and a new sense of humiliation was added to his anger. He ran out into the streets and seized his son and carried him back to his house, meanwhile giving vent to his fury in imprecations and good moralities: then when they reached the house, he gave Francis a sound flogging and finally locked him in a dark room. In such wise did Pietro think to end this strange freak which was bringing ridicule upon his house. When a few days later he had to go abroad on business, he took the precaution to secure his prisoner by putting manacles upon his hands and feet. In time, doubtless, Francis would come to his senses: if not, Pietro knew what he would do. Fortunately he had other sons of a less fantastic disposition, who might turn out good mercers and reputable citizens: there was, in particular, Angelo, the youngest son, a level-headed youth.[1] Yet it went

[1] Angelo in fact seems to have continued the family tradition and to have taken his place amongst the notable citizens. He had a son who joined the Penitential fraternity, as is evident from a legal document published by Cristofani, in which he is styled *Picardus continens*. Cf. Cristofani, *op. cit.* pp. 50-51.

sore with Pietro that Francis his eldest, the pride of his ambitions, should have turned such a failure. And being an unimaginative man he could make no allowance for the personal equation of temperament or character; he could only see wilful opposition to his own designs and a disregard of the family honour and the flouting of unusual opportunities for a successful career. It did not occur to him that his treatment of his son was selfish and unduly severe: rather did he curse the fates which allowed this misfortune to happen to himself and his house. His pride in his family was hurt, and that was the bitter thing to Pietro who had looked to make the house of Bernardone respected in the commune.

The Lady Pica, however, took a more directly personal view of the matter, as women are apt to do. She understood her husband's disappointment, but she also knew and sympathized with the romantic disposition of her boy, and in her heart she was glad that he had turned from the frivolities of the world to the service of God and the poor. Not that she altogether approved of his abandonment of his home: he might serve God and the poor without doing that. And being a dutiful wife she grieved over her husband's bitterness and yearned to bring father and son to some mutual accommodation. So when Pietro had departed she came to Francis and set forth her thoughts and pleaded tearfully that he should meet his father's wishes as it were half-way. But there was that in the Lady Pica's heart which made her but a poor advocate against the imperious demands of Francis' calling: and she ceased to plead and went over to his side. Francis must after all be true to the Divine Voice.

When Pietro Bernardone came back from his journey, he found Francis was gone; for the Lady Pica had freed her boy from his chains and sent him forth with a mother's blessing

to obey the call of his soul. And at that Francis had returned to his lodging at San Damiano.

In the bitterness of his heart Pietro Bernardone cursed his wife; then in a blind fury went off to find his son, thinking still to bring him home and cure him of his folly, or at the worst to drive him from the city and its neighbourhood. But as he approached San Damiano, to his astonishment Francis came out to meet him, bearing himself confidently and without fear. Pietro, however, determined to make a brave show of his authority: harsh words and blows fell upon the son; but there was no shrinking now. Francis suffered meekly yet stoutly: for the sake of Christ who had called him, he would suffer any injury; but he would not betray his soul by returning to the world's ways. And at last Pietro desisted from blows and objurgations and came to bargaining. Francis should be free to go his own evil ways if he would renounce his inheritance and restore the money he had taken at Foligno.

But here there was a difficulty. Francis would willingly renounce his claims to his father's property; but the money he had received at Foligno was no longer his to restore; he had given it to the Church for the repair of the building of San Damiano and the relief of the poor.

A bitter resolve was in the heart of Pietro Bernardone as he turned back and took his way towards the city. He would have his own to the last penny, but Francis should be no longer a son of his. He went at once, making no delay, to the palace of the commune in the great square and laid a claim before the consuls for a return of the money his son had taken and for his disinheritance; and the consuls, knowing his trouble and willing to comfort so worthy a citizen, straightway sent a herald to cite Francis before the communal court.

But the herald brought back word that Francis refused the summons, declaring that as a man dedicated to religion he was not subject to the civic authorities but only to the bishop. Thereupon, finding no help in the consuls, who were unwilling to dispute the case with the Church, Pietro went to the bishop's court and lodged his complaint there.

Now Bishop Guido was not always a man of peace and was quick to uphold the rights of the Church against any attempted infringement on the part of the citizens. But in this instance at least, he acted with irreproachable discretion. When Francis received the bishop's summons he answered: "I will come before the lord bishop gladly, for he is the father and lord of souls". At the trial, the bishop bade Francis restore the money he had given to San Damiano, declaring with a certain aristocratic scorn: "God does not wish His Church to be succoured with goods which perhaps are gotten by injustice". Then he bade Francis have a stout heart and trust in the Lord and have no fear, for that God would provide for him in his necessities in return for the service of His Church. At this Francis was moved with gratitude, taking the words as a promise from God Himself to have a care of him. Rising up in the court he handed over the money and, as he did so, cried out: "My lord, not only the money which belongs to him, but also the clothes I wear, which are his, will I give back": and there and then he took off his clothes, and laid them before the bishop. Men noticed that beneath the rich robe, Francis wore a hairshirt. Then, standing naked, he turned to the people who stood about the court and called aloud: "Hear all of ye and understand: until now I have called Pietro Bernardone my father; but because I propose to serve the Lord I return him his money, concerning which he was troubled, and all the clothes I had of him: for now I wish to

say: Our Father Who art in heaven, and not, father Pietro Bernardone".

Never before perhaps had such an act of renunciation been made in that court. The bishop wept and so did all the people, as much in admiration as in pity, because of the simple sincerity of the act. Pietro, steeling his heart, gathered up the money and clothes, and went out. The people seeing him take away the clothes, looked after him with exclamations of anger: but as the chronicler says: "His father was inflamed with fury and with an exceeding sorrow". There was no triumph in Pietro's heart as he left the court: he went back to his house conscious that the glamour of the high position he had once thought to hold amongst its neighbours, was gone. He might indeed leave to his sons who remained with him a wealthy business and a standing in the commune: but he had dreamt of more than this when he had watched Francis playing the prince amongst the city's youth: and that dream would never lighten his blood again. He returned home a hard and bitter man; yet not without his sorrow.

Meanwhile the bishop was befriending Francis as a newborn son of the Church. In compassion he had taken the young man to his arms and wrapt him about with the folds of his mantle until a farm-labourer's tunic was brought from one of the bishop's servants. This Francis put on, first chalking it with the sign of the cross. Then he took his leave, nor did the bishop seek to prevent him, and for that too Francis was grateful.[1]

It was in truth his marriage day: at last he had found

[1] I Celano, 13-15; II Celano, 12; 3 Soc. 16-20; *Leg. Maj.* II. 2-4. The legend of the *Anonymus Perusinus* says that Francis' disinheritance took place on 16 April, 1207. Cf. *Acta SS.* Octob. II. p. 572.

and wedded the Lady Poverty for whom he had been searching with constant loyalty since he had heard the Voice at Spoleto. He wondered, perhaps, as men are apt to wonder, that he had been so long unknowing, seeing how near she had been to him all these days, but not yet understanding that his blindness was due in part to Poverty's own leading of her lover. For one must needs first learn the individual graces and values of one's ideal and test one's capacity for worship in the presence first of this grace and then of that, and moreover understand something of the sacrifice which worship entails, before one can truly give oneself to the ideal as a unity or personality.

All his life, had Francis but known it, he had been worshipping the Lady Poverty in an incomplete way. In the days when he followed the troubadour and sang their songs in joyous abandonment, he had been worshipping, in some distant way, the mystery of the actual world of men and things, which afterwards was one of his joys in his converse with poverty; his very prodigality at the civic feast was akin to the open-handedness of the poverty which in later years he defined as in part "a free giving";[1] in his intercourse with the poor when he made himself their friend rather than their patron, he had bowed before the spirit of comradeship and the quick understanding of misery, which he came to recognize as a property of his ideal. For all this varied understanding he had been grateful and worshipful: yet did the ultimate worship come to him only on the day of his disinheritance when his soul and body were set free from the ties of wealth and secular ambition: and in this freedom he knew that at last his heart had found its deepest desire. That freedom in which were gathered all his soul's inspirations as

[1] Cf. I Celano, 17.

in their home, was the Lady Poverty; that and nothing less. And now you know perhaps why the poverty which was Francis' ideal love, is styled "the Lady Poverty". It is because of the nobility of life which she brought to Francis: her simple love of God and His creatures, her generosity and pitifulness, her sense of kinship with all the world which acknowledges "our Father in heaven": all which things, the lust of wealth and the ambition for power and honours are apt to pass by as of no account.[1]

So Francis had become his own man, so far as the world saw: but in truth he was the lover of his ideal Poverty.

[1] Concerning the significance of Franciscan poverty, cf. *The Lady Poverty*, a translation by Montgomery Carmichael of the *Sacrum Commercium S. Francisci cum Domina Paupertate*: cf. also *St. Francis and Poverty*, by the present writer.

ABOVE SAN DAMIANO

CHAPTER IV.

FRANCIS RECEIVES HIS KNIGHTHOOD OF THE CROSS.

Francis went back to San Damiano, but he could not at once settle himself there. For awhile he must leave Assisi and its neighbourhood and be alone with his own soul. He was yet somewhat dazed by this freedom which had come to him, and the fullness of life which it brought. He must have time to realize his happiness and to get accustomed to this new liberty. Quite what it all meant he did not even yet know. Only this was he certain of, that he was now Christ's servitor, acknowledged as such by the Church, and that Christ had called him to a life of blissful poverty unknown in the world where men bartered away their souls' freedom for material gain and secular ambition. This little church of San Damiano was waiting to be repaired, and across the woods the lepers, his new friends, would be expecting him. But these must wait for a time.

He set out over the hills which lay to the north beyond Monte Subasio. It was the spring-time when the fields and the woods and all the earth is instinct with new life, and the air is still pure from the winter's frosts and rains and fragrant with the scent of the spring vegetation. High up in the mountains the snow had not yet melted in the hollows and nooks where the shadows mock the sun, but upon the plain and face of the hills was a virginal warmth. As he went

along, now with a quickened step, now at more leisurely pace, there was joy in the heart of Francis. The friendly earth had no jar upon his happiness: it too was young and free and vital as he. Instinctively he recognized the comradeship of the mountain heights and the deep ravines and the shadowy woods, and of the bare rugged slopes, so strong and bracing, and yet revealing a tenderness where the wild flowers nestle in the rocky soil. And as he went he sang, not in his native tongue but in the musical language of the Provençal troubadour.

So he had come to the heights on the left bank of the river Chiagio where the hills begin to decline towards Gubbio, a perilous lonely place where the traveller must beware of the robbers who infested the neighbourhood, claiming toll from those who journeyed between the marches of Ancona and the cities of Umbria. Suddenly he was stopped by a party of these marauders, who demanded who he might be. "What is that to you?" replied Francis. "But know I am a herald of the Great King." He uttered in simple sincerity the thought which was in his mind. With ferocious humour the robbers stripped him of his labourer's tunic and tossed him into a ditch in which the snow still lay. "Lie there, thou fool herald!" they jibed, and so left him.[1]

Francis picked himself up gaily: it was an adventure in this new quest. But he was almost naked and must needs find some garment to clothe him. Not far away was a monastery: thither he went and offered himself as a servant, hoping thus to obtain both food and clothing. The monks put him to assist in the kitchen, giving him food but refusing

[1] I Celano, 16; *Leg. Maj.* II. 5. Tradition places the scene of this incident at Caprignone. Cf. Lucarelli, *Memorie e Guida Storica di Gubbio*, p. 583 *seq.*; P. Nicola Cavanna, *L'Umbria Francescana*, p. 194 *seq.*

him any garment. In sheer necessity therefore, but with no ill-will, Francis left them after a few days.[1] His thoughts turned now towards a friend of former time who lived in the city of Gubbio, and thither he made his way. His friend received him kindly. After all it was not a rare occurrence for men to embrace a religious penitential life, and a friend at a distance might well take a more detached view of a man's doings than could be demanded from his daily companions and neighbours. Anyway, Francis was given a dress similar to that worn by hermits and pilgrims: a tunic with a leathern girdle, and shoes and a staff.[2] He then made his way back again to Assisi.

At San Damiano the priest made him welcome, and with a simple courtesy bade him share what shelter and food was his.[3] Francis now set himself to fulfil the service which the Voice had given him to do. He did not yet realize the larger significance of the bidding to "go and repair My Church". That is to come to him later on and then he will know that it is the Church of living souls which he is to help restore to its strength and beauty. At present he takes the words to refer merely to the crumbling sanctuary in which he heard the Voice. As he looked back across the intervening weeks to the day when the command had come to him, a whole age

[1] It is impossible to identify this monastery, as there were several monasteries in the neighbourhood; San Verecondo at Vallingegno, S. Pietro in Vigneti; whilst local tradition claims the incident for Santa Maria della Rocca near Valfabbrica. It is well to know that the prior of the monastery later on, when Francis had become famous, apologized for the lack of charity (I Celano, 16).

[2] I Celano, 16; *Leg. Maj.* II. 6. According to tradition the friend was a Frederigo Spadalunga, upon the site of whose house it is said the great church of San Francesco was afterwards built. Cf. G. Mazzatinti in *Miscell. Franc.* Vol. V, p. 76 *seq.*

[3] Cf. 3 Soc. 21.

seemed to have passed as in a moment of eternity, for there are happenings in the soul's experience which are as the moments of eternity, when the clear light leaps suddenly from out the dim glimmerings of long years. It seemed strange to him now that he should have thought to buy the materials for the repairing of the Church with his father's money. That money, and all the life with which it was associated, was now to him so unreal. Only his blindness could have made him think to fulfil his service with such a beginning. His work and all his life must needs be his homage to that noble Poverty which had come to him. With a light heart he appeared for the first time in his native city as a beggar. He wanted oil to replenish the lamp which he had lit before the crucifix that day of the Voice. But as he drew near to the house where he had thought to beg the oil, he saw a party of his former friends making merry in the doorway; and at the sight of them his courage failed him, and all the dignity of his new manhood with which he had started on his quest, seemed to shrink within him. He drew back and went another way. But the weakness did not last long. Ashamed of his cowardice he retraced his steps, and walking into the midst of the party he told them to look upon a coward who had run away in shame. Then boldly he begged of them some oil, falling as he did so into the language of Provence: and with the hardly earned oil he returned to San Damiano, feeling at once the humiliation and joy of the day.[1] After this he was to be seen frequently in the city, begging stones and mortar and whatever he needed for the rebuilding of the church. As he went through the streets he chanted a rhythm in the Provençal tongue: "Who will give stones for the renewing of San Damiano? whoso

[1] 3 Soc. 24, II Celano, 13.

gives one stone shall have one reward ; whoso gives two stones shall have two rewards ; whoso gives three stones shall have three rewards ". Some who heard him jeered at him as a man gone mad, but others more kindly gave him what he asked for ; and Francis with his load would toil back to his sanctuary.[1]

With the aid of the friendly peasants he set to work upon the church, borne up in the heavy labour to which he was unused, by the great happiness in his soul. At times people from the city or travellers would stop to pass the greetings of the day and gossip with the builders. Francis, sociable and generous, would sometimes bid them come and take a hand at the work. "Come and help us in our work," he would say, "for this church of San Damiano will one day be a convent of ladies whose life and fame will glorify our heavenly Father in all the world."[2] From this saying, it is evident that Francis in his hours of solitary meditation and in his labour, was already receiving premonitions of the larger work before him : but the future was in God's Hands, and Francis was happy in the work of the present.

Day by day he worked away at the walls ; but meanwhile he did not forget his friends the lepers. Part of his time he gave to their service, either at the leper settlement at Santa Maddalena, or at the hospital of San Salvatore where the Crucigeri, or Cross-bearing brothers, took them in and nursed them. And ever his reverence and love for the lepers seemed to grow in him. One day he met a leper on the road who was coming back from a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles in Rome, whither he had gone to beseech for a cure of his

[1] 3 Soc. 21 ; II Celano, 13 ; *Leg. Maj.* II. 7.

[2] 3 Soc. 24 ; *Testamentum S. Clarae* in *Seraph. Legisl. Textus Originales*, p. 274.

disease. His face was eaten away and he was pitiful to look upon. Won by Francis' brotherly sympathy, the poor sufferer threw himself upon the ground to kiss the imprint of his feet, delicately avoiding touching the person of his friend. But Francis, much moved by this act of courtesy, bent and took the man in his arms and kissed him on the mouth. At the kiss, says Saint Bonaventure, the leprosy disappeared.[1]

But often at the close of day Francis was spent with his labours and over-tired. So delicately nurtured as he had been, not even his new-born happiness and love could altogether uphold his physical strength. And the priest, seeing him thus utterly worn, would grow anxious and fearful. In his solicitude he began to prepare more appetizing foods to tempt the young neophyte to eat after his day's work. At first Francis accepted this kindness with a simple gratitude; till one day he began to feel a danger to his vocation in the priest's thoughtful care of him, and he took fright, being mindful of his natural inclination for things delicate and tasteful. Having left the luxuries of the world he might yet enslave himself to the simple comforts of this priest's house and lose his soul's freedom and become a traitor to the poverty he had come to love. "Not everywhere Francis," he argued with himself, "will you find men to minister to your wants as does this good priest: this is not the life of one who professes poverty; nor does it behove thee to get accustomed to such things, else wilt thou after awhile return to the things thou hast cast behind and once more run after delicacies. Rise up thou lazy one and go begging from door to door the leavings of the table." So as one in danger of turning recreant, he went next day into the city, carrying a dish; and the citizens humouring his will, gave him the

[1] *Leg. Maj.* II, 6; cf. I Celano, 17.

scraps from their tables, so that his dish was filled. But when Francis came to eat of it, his ingrained daintiness kicked, nor at first could he constrain himself to eat. Then he did battle with himself; he recalled to mind the poverty of Christ and the hardships of the poor and his own sworn allegiance; and in the end his loyalty conquered. He made his meal of the mess of broken victuals, even with something of an appetite, for he began to feel in the eating a strange spiritual joy. This meal became to him a sort of sacramental communion, bringing him into closer kinship with the multitude who depend for their daily bread upon the goodwill of men and with those whose generosity was feeding him, and with the Lord Christ who is at once the Lord of rich and poor. And over all this great human family into which he felt himself caught up, lay the bright mystery of the Divine Providence to whose care he had committed himself on the day of his disinheritance. In the goodwill of men upon whom he had no claim beyond the claim of his human necessity, he saw at once the symbol, and in some sense the fulfilment, of the solicitude of Him Who sends down His rain upon the just and the unjust with no grudging hand: and this seemed to him now a duty, that as he had cast his care upon that Divine bounty he must also trust himself to the goodwill and bounty of man and all creation. It were no new thing to him to play the part of the generous giver: that he had done all his life and would continue to do with all the means he had: and this too he considered a mark of noble manhood and a duty of honour for all the children of God.[1] But in his dependence upon the goodwill of men he found a more intimate sense of God's Fatherhood and of the encircling bond of kinship which makes all the world a family:

[1] Cf. I Celano, 17.

and for this reason he henceforth regarded the beggar, in his utter dependence, with an immense reverence as one who held in his condition the secret of that active love which gives a man the full freedom of the family of God and makes the wide earth one domestic hearth. In the same way he came to reverence all weak and helpless things. It would not be easy to construct an economic system upon this worship of the beggar which now became a part of Francis' life: for you would need to work into the system the religious faith and high qualities of heart and the soaring idealism, which gave to this worship its equipoise and perfect sanity. Moreover it must be remembered that Francis' willingness to receive from others was indissolubly wedded to a readiness to give—a combination of qualities not always linked together. But as Francis would have told you, he who would accept in the spirit of brotherhood the gift of another, must place no fence around his own property. He must himself be a servant to others, before he can rightly accept another's service. Good service must go with the questing for alms; else do the alms become a defrauding of the giver, a species of rapine and a blasphemy against the Providence which inspires a generous soul. Francis never spared the idler who lived at ease on others' gifts. Hence in after years when disciples came to him, he was insistent on the moral obligation of labour and the service of one's neighbour: just as in these first days of his alms-seeking, he comes to the city from his toiling upon the walls of San Damiano and the nursing of the lepers. Only whilst he gives his own service he will bargain for no wage but be wholly dependent upon his neighbour's good-will and God's over-ruling providence.[1] True,

[1] Cf. *Saint Francis and Poverty* by the present author: and also *St. Francis of Assisi, Social Reformer*, by Fr. Leo Dubois.

he might upon this same ground have accepted the kindly meals offered him by the priest: but Francis was hungering for the uttermost of poverty and careful for the freedom of his soul: and he feared lest the simple comfort and regular provision of the priest's house should make him slack in his spiritual quest and hold him back from his new-found liberty. So with heroic resolve he took upon him the estate of the beggar in the street. And would he have been the Francis that we love, had he done less?

From that day Francis, begging his bread from door to door, became a familiar figure in the streets of Assisi. His daily round was not without its humiliation and suffering. What he felt most keenly was the bitterness of his father. Pietro Bernardone never met his son in the street but he cursed him. This business of going abegging for his bread was the last indignity Francis had heaped upon the proud spirit of his house. Very bitter after all was Pietro's lot: all his canons of respectability were being openly set at nought, and all the sacred prejudices of his class being violated by this son of his, whom he might disinherit and disown, but whom the people, and still more he himself, would always remember as his son. He could cheat neither his memory nor his heart by the blatant act of disinheritance: but as the sapient old chronicle remarks, "because he had loved his son much he was now ashamed of him and did much grieve over him".[1]

One day Francis, quivering under Pietro's curse, sought out a simple beggar man. "Come and accompany me on my quests," he said, "and I will give thee a share in the alms I receive. And when thou shalt see my father curse me, I on my part will say to thee: 'bless me, my father;' and thou shalt make the sign of the cross over me in my father's stead!"

[1] 3 Soc. 23.

At the next meeting of father and son, when Pietro uttered his usual curse, the beggar made the sign of blessing as had been agreed. Then Francis turned to his father: "Believe you not," he said, "that God can give me a father to bless me against your curses?" Others of his family affected to take him less seriously. One cold winter's morning one of his brothers, in company with a friend, came upon Francis very barely clad; and the brother said to his friend: "Go and ask Francis to sell us a drop of his sweat". Francis overheard the remark, and laughed aloud. "Nay," he replied in French, "I sell it more dearly to my Lord."[1]

So the days went by. Francis was gradually learning the lesson of his calling. In the hard realities of those days of physical discomfort and fatigue and personal humiliation, he was shedding the last illusions of his upbringing, and gaining the experience with which the poor and helpless are so intimately familiar. His comfort came to him in his long hours of communion with his Divine Master, when his new experiences became transfused with a spiritual glory, and he began to see the trace of the Redeemer of the world in the world's sorrow and hardship and contradictions: and this made his new life very sweet to him; for everywhere he began to find the presence of his Lord, and the earth in its commingling of sorrow and beauty, of goodness and sin, became to him a veritable crucifix. This transfigurement of the very earth was indeed the joy and wonderment of these days of purgation, and, as he afterwards confessed, the singular dower of his Lady Poverty.[2]

The rebuilding of San Damiano being at length completed, Francis set to work upon another crumbling chapel dedicated to St. Peter which stood some little distance from Assisi, but

[1] 3 Soc. 23; II Celano, 12. [2] Cf. Fioretti, cap. 12.

the exact site of which is now not known.[1] Then when his work here was finished, he turned to another wayside chapel which too was in need of repairs, and to which his heart went out with a peculiar yearning, for it was dedicated to the Virgin Mother of God and about it were told strange stories of angelic visitants. It was known as the chapel of Santa Maria della Porziuncola—Saint Mary of the Little Portion. How it came by its name nobody can tell with any certitude,[2] though in after years a story was told which may have had its origin in a local tradition. In the days of St. Cyril the bishop of Jerusalem, the story goes, four pilgrims left Palestine to visit the shrines of the Apostles at Rome and afterwards by the advice of the Pope they came seeking a hermitage in Umbria where they might peacefully serve God; and they came to this wood near Assisi and built themselves a chapel and four huts. In memory of the land they came from, they dedicated the chapel under the title of Saint Mary of Jehosaphat. They were holy men, and the spot they chose was holy; for often in the chapel were heard the voices of angels praising God. But after a time they bethought them of their native land, and first burying a relic of our Lady's sepulchre beneath the altar of the chapel, they returned to Palestine. But the angels loved the chapel and continued

[1] I Celano, 21; *Leg. Maj.* II. 7. Celano says the Church was near the city; but St. Bonaventure says it was further off than San Damiano.

[2] The origin of the title "*de Portiuncula*" is disputed. Some say it was given to the chapel because of the straitness of the ground given to the Benedictines when they built the chapel; others, that the title was taken from another chapel built in the neighbourhood of Subiaco. Cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *Des Origines de l'Eglise de la Portiuncula*. The first known mention of the name of the Porziuncola is in a legal document of 1045, discovered by Froudini in the archives of the Cathedral of Assisi. Cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *L'Abbaye de Saint-Benoit au Mont Soubase*, p. 18, n. 1

to visit it and sing the praises of God there; and from time to time a hermit would come and dwell by the chapel; but more often it was deserted. Then came Saint Benedict, the father of monks, passing upon a time through Umbria, and chancing upon the chapel he discovered its holiness and had it restored. And he went and begged a small plot of ground adjoining the chapel and built a cell there: and because of the gift of land, he renamed the chapel, Saint Mary of the Little Portion. And he sent monks thither from the great monastery of Monte Cassino. But the monks after many years built a monastery on Monte Subasio and forsook the chapel in the plain.[1] Be the truth of this story what it may, the chapel was undoubtedly very ancient. It stood in the plain, two miles from the city, and the intervening ground was covered with a dense wood. One might easily lose one's way in the shadowy paths which struck off from the Via Francesca, the highway that skirted the city walls. Quite possibly this chapel, so remote in its solitude yet so conveniently near the city, had been one of Francis' retreats since first he began

[1] Cf. P. Edouard d'Alencon, *Des Origines de l'Eglise de la Portiuncula.* The legend is first found in *Paradisus Seraphicus* written by P. Salvator Vitalis and published at Milan in 1645, a work of no critical value. There is moreover no historical record of any visit of St. Benedict to Assisi; nor of the hermits who are supposed to have dwelt there. The chapel nevertheless was very ancient even in St. Francis' time. Celano says it was "built in ancient days" "*antiquitus constructa*" (I Celano, 21), and St. Bonaventure writes that it was often visited by angels and that "from olden time it was called Saint Mary of the Angels" (*Leg. Maj.* II. 8; cf. II Celano, 19). Also, it belonged to the monks of Monte Subasio. Around these facts the legend may have been woven by the peasantry before it found its way into Vitalis' book. It is not unlikely that hermits had at times dwelt there before St. Francis' day, owing to the natural seclusion. The wood has long since given place to olive gardens and vineyards, but there is yet an indication of it outside the Porta di Mojano as you go towards the Church of San Damiano.

to withdraw from the world: but now as he worked at its walls the attraction grew upon him. It became like home to to him, did this leafy solitude with its little chapel: in some way it was a fitting symbol of the Lady Poverty. Not far away, less than half-an-hour's walk, were the leper settlements, and not much further off was the city: this human neighbourhood was needful for the discharge of those neighbourly services he owed his fellow-man and for his beggar's quest: but here in the wood within hail of his fellow-men, he found what his soul delighted in—the companionship of Nature unspoilt by the artifice of man. He loved the music in the trees when the wind rustled in the leaves, and the piping of the birds, and the movement of some animal in the undergrowth: all beasts of earth or air were dear to him. He loved too the lights and shadows and the wonderful growth of grass and tree. All these things seemed to him to lie close to the heart of created life and to the hand of the Creator, and they warmed his own heart and filled him with a great reverence. Somehow too they seemed to him the dower of the Lady Poverty, even as did the beggar and the sufferer, because they lacked the artificiality of the world of prosperous men and therefore bespoke more truly and simply the providence of God. And then this chapel in the wood was as a witness to the nearness of heaven to the simple things of the earth. It was no strange thing to him that angels' voices should mingle with the voices of the wood in the Creator's praise, and it was to him a sign of the nobility of his ideal Poverty that the Mother of God should have inspired men to dedicate this spot under her name, as though she would clothe the Lady Poverty in a mantle of her own glory.[1]

[1] See the *Salutatio Virtutum* (Opuscula S. P. Franc., ed. Quarracchi, pp. 20-31), in praise of poverty and the sister virtues which St. Francis always

Thus in those quiet hours of labour and prayer Francis was learning the deeper values of the life he had taken.

The chapel of the Porziuncola was restored by the opening of the year 1209, and mass was now occasionally said there. Again Francis was awaiting the command of the Lord. The inward assurance which had bidden him set his hand to the repairing of the three deserted churches and find his vocation in that employment, had now gone, and his soul was again listening for the voice of the Lord which was his guidance. He knew the voice would come to him in God's own time and he knew the time was near. It was the moment between the dawn and the day, that moment never afterwards forgotten by the soul, so full is it of the breaking mystery of life. The revelation came, as it always comes, even to the expectant spirit, unexpectedly: and it came to him at the Porziuncola.

One day towards the end of winter—it was the feast of St. Mathias the Apostle, 24 February—a priest was saying mass in the chapel and Francis was assisting, and the Gospel which the priest read was this: "Going forth, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Possess not gold nor silver nor money in your purses nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats nor shoes nor a staff; for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till you go hence. And when you come into a house, salute it, saying: Peace be to this house. . . . Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents but simple as doves. . . . But when they shall deliver you up, take

especially associated with the virtue of poverty. This salutation is in several MSS. inscribed as a praise of the Blessed Virgin (cf. F. Percival Robinson, *The Writings of St. Francis*, p. 20, n. 6; Boehmer, *Analekten*, pp. vi and xxviii).

no thought how or what to speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak."[1]

Francis, as was his wont, listened intently as the Gospel was read, for this book had become verily to him the book of life. But to-day the words were like the sudden breaking of bonds: this was the Truth for which his soul had waited. And yet he was timorous lest perhaps he had not understood aright. So after mass he begged the priest to read the Gospel again to him and explain its meaning. This the priest did. Then Francis exclaimed, no longer hesitating: "This is what I have been seeking; this is what my heart yearns for"; and in a sweet certainty he at once set about fulfilling his Lord's command. In that quickly responsive way he always had, he immediately put off his shoes and laid aside his staff, and divested himself of his second garment; and because he was eager to draw even more nigh to his crucified Master, he made himself a habit shaped like a cross and instead of a leathern belt he girded himself with a rope.[2] To him it was his solemn investiture as a knight of Christ.

At that moment all his early dream of knightly adventure seemed well on the way to be satisfied, he being true and God's grace assisting. For certainly, he deemed, there could

[1] Matt. x. 7-19. This is the Gospel for the feast of St. Mathias in the ancient missals; whence the Bollandists conclude that it was on this feast that Francis received his final call (cf. *Acta SS.*, 4 October, Tom. II, p. 574; Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 124; P. Sabatier, *Vie de S. François*, p. 78). Spader in *Lumi Seraphici* places the event on the feast of St. Luke, 12 October, 1208; and he is followed by Père Gratien in *Études Franciscaines*, Tome XVIII, No. 106, Octôbre, 1907, p. 388.

Celano says the restoration of the Porziuncola took place in the third year of Francis' conversion (cf. 1 Celano, 21). So also say Bernard of Besse (*Lib. de Laudibus*, in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 687), and Giordano da Giano (Chron. Jordani in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 2).

[2] 1 Celano, 22; 3 Soc. 25; *Leg. Maj.* III. 1.

be no nobler knighthood than this, with Christ for his liege-lord and his ideal Poverty for the lady of his worship. Out in the wide world he would go seeking souls in need of succour; and the powers of evil who raised enmities between God and man, and man and man, were the recreants against whom he must war; and everywhere he would proclaim the reign of Christ and His peace. And in his love of Poverty he would find his strength and comfort to serve the Lord Christ well.

So Francis takes up his life-burden. The golden sunlight of his youth's dream lies upon his path; his heart is lifted up with a great love. The coming years will surely bring their meed of adventure and disillusion, of sorrow and joy; but as he sets out upon his way sturdily and with a glad emotion, he thinks little of the mystery of the future: enough for him is the obedience of the day.

CHAPTER V.

THE BEGINNING OF A NEW FRATERNITY.

TAKING the path through the wood one day shortly after that notable reading of the Gospel, Francis came into the city. His whole being was alight with the divine inspiration which was urging him on. Meeting some citizens intent upon their daily rounds he stopped, and with great earnestness saluted them: "Brothers, the Lord give you His peace". Hardly at first did they recognize him in his strange garment, with the rope round his waist and his feet bare; but there was a look in his face as of one gazing beyond the earth into the heavens,[1] which stopped their ready jest and compelled their reverence. They had now grown tolerant of his ways; his evident sincerity and tenacity of purpose had begun to gain their respect. They might at times pass the laugh at him or meet him with a careless quip; but few were able to resist his personal charm and the gentle good humour of his retorts. And then there was his industry in repairing the chapels and his devotion to the lepers. Those mediaeval folk were easily swayed either to derision or respect by what they saw of a man's work and by his bearing amongst them; and they loved gallantry and fearlessness of any sort. But to-day there was something in Francis which quelled all inclination to jocularity

[1] "*Totus alter videbatur quam fuerat; et caelum intuens dedignabatur respicere terram*" (I Celano, 23).

as he poured forth a fervent plea for peace amongst men and love of the good God.[1] So often they had heard the same message delivered by some wandering devotee or by the Pope's legate when he had upbraided them for their feuds or by some preacher in the Duomo. And always this appeal for peace amongst Christian men had seemed so right and yet so impossible. How could any man maintain his standing amongst his fellows if he were a man of peace and kept apart from the quarrels of his family or class? A man might as well turn monk at once. And yet as Francis pleaded with them they felt the sanctity of his words and a sense of guiltiness such as they had seldom felt before. They were not altogether convinced; but as the new evangelist left them and passed on, they stood silent and amazed, and going their ways, they, for a while at least, remembered his plea. After this first day of his mission he went frequently into the city on the same errand. He preached no set discourse; he merely stopped the citizens as he met them, with his greeting of peace and his soulful plea: and soon men began to expect him and wait upon his words. It was a new excitement, this appearance of the son of Pietro Bernardone in the rôle of evangelist; and if the truth must be told, the Assisians were probably not a little gratified. Most cities counted a lay-preacher amongst their excitements and he was sure of a hearing; though after a time, when factions formed around him, he might preach at the risk of his life. But Francis was different from most of the lay-evangelists. He neither denounced the magistrates nor the clergy; he did not pour out vials of wrath on the sinner's head, nor did he show any contempt for the weaknesses of men. He spoke as one looking intently upon a vision of beauty, and asserting its claim upon men's lives,

[1] 3 Soc. 25; *Leg. Maj.* III. 2.

and sorrowing for the blindness which made a man unseeing; or as one who wishes to share with another the treasure he himself has found. And he was so manifestly happy in himself and in his message: and in this too he was unlike most other reformers. But with his change of garment he seemed to have put on that indefinable quality which marks a man for moral leadership, which belongs to men who not only possess a faith but are possessed by it and who besides have a certain imperative need to share their faith with others. They do not necessarily make a conscious effort to attract disciples: the quality of the faith which is in them does this often without any specific act of will on their part: they find themselves leaders rather than make themselves leaders.

When the spring had run but half its course Francis was no longer a solitary: his retreat at the Porziuncola had already welcomed his first disciples, or as he would have said, his first brothers in the knightly order of Poverty. They were Bernard da Quintavalle, Peter Cathanii and Giles[1]—three valiant men, as their history afterwards proved.

[1] Celano, 3 Soc. and *Leg. Maj.* mention Bernard by name but he is first styled Bernard da Quintavalle by Bernard of Besse in *Liber de laudibus*, ed. Hilarinus a Lucerna, p. 5. Cf. Chron. XXIV, Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 667, *Actus S. Franc.* I. 10-44. Peter is named in the 3 Soc. and is undoubtedly referred to in I Celano, 25: *Statim autem vir alter . . . qui valde in conversatione laudabilis extitit et quod sancte coepit sanctius post modicum consummavit.* It is disputed whether this Peter is the Peter Cathanii who became Vicar General and died in 1221. But from Celano's description and his reference to Peter's death it seems probable. Peter Cathanii, according to the Chron. Jordani (*Anal. Franc.* I. p. 4) was a doctor of law and highly respected by St. Francis. Barthol. of Pisa says he was a Canon of the Cathedral (*De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 472). The words: "*Valde in conversatione laudabilis*" imply something more than uprightness of manners on the lips of Celano, who always shows much reverence for learning. If it is

Bernard da Quintavalle was the first to seek out Francis and abide with him.[1] Like Francis, he was one of the merchant class,[2] and wealthy: but in character he was of a very different mould. His nature was serious and thoughtful and not easily won over to enthusiasms, but given to weighing the values of things. He was quick to discern the true from the plausible, but would withhold his judgment till he had proved his instinct: a cautious man but loyal; generous but diffident. For some time past Bernard had been observant of Francis: he had narrowly watched his bearing and resolution; had admired the sincerity and courage of his life of poverty and his industry in repairing deserted chapels, until in spite of his caution he began to feel drawn to follow him. Being a religious man he wanted to save his soul, and already he felt the vanity of the world. Not wishing to commit himself in the eyes of the citizens, he visited Francis secretly and then offered him the hospitality of his house: and Francis, delighting in his company, went frequently to pass

urged that Peter's death, supposing him to be the Peter who died in 1221, can hardly be said to have happened "*post modicum*," one must remember Celano's use of such terms: e.g. he speaks of the incident of the Stigmata as happening "shortly after" (*paulo post*) Francis heard the Voice from the crucifix at San Damiano (cf. II Celano, I, 11).

[1] So say the 3 Soc. 27, and the *Leg. Maj.* III. 3. But in I Celano, 24, mention is made of another, a nameless one, who, says Celano, was the first to join himself to Francis before the three mentioned in the text. Who was this nameless one? And why do none of the other legends refer to him He left behind him a good name, for Celano describes him approvingly: *puum ac simplicem spiritum gerens.* Is Celano referring to the poor man whom Francis took to bless him against his father's curses? or was he one who tarried awhile and then went away? It is impossible to decide.

[2] Celano evidently implies this by his use of the phrase "*ad mercandum regnum coelorum*" (I Celano, 24). Such conceits of language were dear to the chronicler.

the night with him.[1] Partly out of reverence for his guest and partly the better to observe his ways, Bernard had a bed prepared for Francis in his own chamber. When the time came they would both retire to rest, but Bernard only feigned to sleep, being awake with his thoughts. And so he learned something of the secret of Francis' life. For after a short sleep, Francis would quietly rise and give himself to prayer, often in his fervour unburdening his soul in murmured praises of God and the Blessed Virgin. And Bernard, listening, would say to himself: "Truly this man comes from God".

At length one evening Bernard said to Francis: "What should a man do for the best if having for many years held property of his lord, he now had no wish to retain it any longer?" Francis replied that he ought to return it to the lord. "Then," said Bernard, "I wish for the love of God and my Lord Jesus Christ, to dispose of all my temporal goods which the Lord has conveyed to me, as it may seem best to thee." And Francis answered: "In the early morning we will go to the church and from the book of the Gospels we will get to know what the Lord taught His disciples to do".

Meanwhile Peter Cathanii, who had studied in the schools of Bologna and was a doctor of laws, had also felt the stirring of the spirit, and like Bernard had taken counsel of Francis, and in some way placed himself under his guidance, as a scholar under his master. And Francis was glad that a man of the schools should thus be drawn to the simple ways of evangelical poverty, and he had a great reverence for one who was at once learned and God-fearing: he himself being but little versed in letters.

[1] The house of Bernard da Quintavalle is still shown in the Via Sbaraglini near the Bishop's palace.

So when, at daybreak, Francis and Bernard set out, they called for Peter, and together the three came to the church of St. Nicholas in the great square.[1] The book of the Gospels lay near the altar that all might read who cared. But neither Francis nor Bernard were scholars, and Peter, though he might be learned in law, had no aptness in the knowledge of Scripture: and they were all puzzled to know where in the book they might find the teaching suited to their need. So Francis knelt before the altar and prayed God to show them His Will in the opening of the book. Then he took the book and opened it and his eyes fell upon this passage from the Gospel of St. Matthew: "If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me". A second time he opened the book and read this from St. Luke: "Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor scrip nor bread nor money, neither have two coats". Then opening the book a third time, he came again upon St. Matthew's gospel at these words: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me".[2] At this, Francis turned gleefully to his companions: "Brothers," he exclaimed, "this is our life and rule for ourselves and for all who will join our company. Go, therefore, and fulfil the word you have heard." So the two neophytes went off, Bernard to sell all his substance, which was great, and Peter to dispose of his more modest property.[3]

[1] It is now the *caserma* for the constabulary: but the altar-table, long since removed, is preserved in the Cathedral, being inserted into an altar in a side chapel to the right of the choir.

[2] Matt. xix. 21; Luke ix. 3; Matt. xvi. 24.

[3] 3 Soc. 27-29; I Celano, 24-25; II Celano, 15; *Leg. Maj.* iii. 3. Neither Celano nor St. Bonaventure associate Peter with Bernard in this incident. I Celano says Peter came *immediately* after Bernard: *Statim eadem*,

A few days later, it was the 16th day of April, there was a gathering of all the poor of Assisi in the Piazza San Giorgio:[1] and Bernard, who had sold his goods, was giving the money into their hands. Francis was assisting at the distribution and singing aloud his praises of God. Not a few of the citizens were there too, looking on at this strange deed and amazed at such recklessness. In the crowd that gathered was a priest, by name Sylvester, who at one time had given Francis stones for the rebuilding of the churches. He came forward now, seeing so much money going a-begging, and addressing Francis, exclaimed: "Brother, you did not pay me well for those stones; give me now a share of this money". "Thou shalt have thy due, sir priest," Francis replied smiling; and taking two handfuls of coins from Bernard's cloak, he gave them to the priest, and then another two handfuls. "Art satisfied?" he asked: and Sylvester muttering that he was now well paid, went home.[2]

That day and for days afterwards there was much discussion whenever men met in the city streets or in their homes about this wholesale casting away of one's property by so notable a citizen as the wealthy Bernard da Quintavalle.[3]

But Francis with Bernard and Peter had gone out to the

etc. The account given in 3 Soc. is, however, probably authentic; and it is to be noticed that whereas I Celano mentions only one opening of the book, II Celano mentions the three openings as in 3 Soc. Probably Bernard was the first to approach Francis with a view to joining him; even 3 Soc. gives Bernard the first place amongst the three companions.

[1] *Vita B. Fratris Ægidii* [ed. Lemmens], 1, in *Documenta Antiqua*, I. (Quaracchi), p. 38. It is now the Piazza Santa Chiara, since the church of Santa Chiara was built over and beside the church of San Giorgio.

[2] 3 Soc. 30; II Celano, 109; *Actus S. Franc.* I. 38-40.

[3] Cf. *Vita B. Fr. Ægidii* loc. cit.; *Cum audiret a quibusdam consanguineis et ab aliis, etc.*

retreat of the Porziuncola:[1] and Francis was happy because the Lord had given him true friends and companions.

Eight days later came Giles. He too was a native of Assisi but a man neither of birth nor wealth, being the son of a small farmer or husbandman. But what he lacked in worldly estate was made good to him in the refinement and nobility of his mind. He was much given to dwelling in his own thoughts, and was for ever peering into the soul-world: and he had a shrewd judgment and ready wit. In after years, when his fame had gone abroad, learned men flocked to him to gather some pithy word of wisdom, and the men of the schools grew careful how they challenged his satire and piercing common sense. Even the great Bonaventure revered him as a master in the science of the soul.[2]

His coming to Francis was typical of the sagacious simplicity of his character. When Bernard was distributing his wealth on the Piazza San Giorgio, Giles was very likely at his work in the fields, and it was only from his kinsfolk and acquaintances that he heard the gossip of the day. But the story kindled his imagination and desire, and he there and

[1] 3 Soc. 32, says distinctly that Francis and his two companions went to the Porziuncola, where Celano tells us Francis had begun to dwell constantly (cf. I Celano, 21). Francis was also dwelling at the Porziuncola about the time that Morico of the Crutched Friars joined him. The phrase of St. Bonaventure in *Leg. Maj.* IV. 8: "*cum oleo accepto de lampade quae coram Virginis ardebat altari*," I imagine refers to the altar in the chapel of the Porziuncola.

[2] Concerning Bro. Giles cf. Fr. Paschal Robinson, *The Golden Sayings of Brother Giles*; P. Gisbert Menge, *Der Selige Ægidius von Assisi*. His legend has been published by Lemmens in *Doc. Antiqua Franciscana*, Pars I; and in *Analecta Franc.* tom. III. p. 74 *seq.* Cf. *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. pp. 205-13. An Italian version of the legend is found in most editions of the *Fioretti*. The *Dicta B. Ægidii* are published by the Bollandists: *Acta SS.* 23 Aprilis, p. 227 *seq.*; and in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 214 *seq.*

then determined to seek out Francis and ask to be taken into his company. On the feast of St. George he went to an early mass at the Martyrs' church, thinking perhaps that Francis would be there; and not finding him at the church he set out to seek him at the Porziuncola, where he was told Francis now dwelt. The chapel in the wood was unknown to him, and he knew not its location; but he went out by the Via Francesca until he came to the cross-roads near the leper hospital of San Salvatore;[1] but here he knew not which path to take. So he stopped and began to pray that God would show him the road. And whilst he was praying Francis came out of the wood near by. Then Giles, thanking God, ran forward and fell upon his knees, saying simply: "Brother Francis, I want to be with you for the love of God".

Quick to read souls, Francis recognized at once a true companion, and his heart went out to him in brotherly tenderness. "Knowest thou," asked Francis, "how great a favour the Lord has given thee? If, my brother, the emperor came to Assisi and wished to choose one of the citizens to be his knight or chamberlain, many are they who would come forward to claim the honour. How much more highly then shouldst thou esteem it to be chosen by the Lord from out of so many, and to be called to His court." And bending over him, Francis lifted up the kneeling man and took him

[1] Where the Casa Gualdo now stands. M. Sabatier (*Vie di S. François*, p. 66) implies that Giles did not know where Francis dwelt, and from this draws the conclusion that Francis at this time had no fixed abode. But the *Vita B. Fr. Ægidii*, loc. cit., says expressly that Giles "directed his steps to the Church of St. Mary of the Porziuncola . . . *which place Brother Giles did not know*". Giles evidently had no doubt as to where St. Francis was to be found, only he did not know the way. The leper hospital of San Salvatore was served by the Crucigeri, an order of nursing brothers which was widely extended in Italy and in Latin possessions in the East. Cf. *Registres de Grégoire IX*, Luc. Auvray, no. 209, p. 123.

at once to the Porziuncola and introduced him to Brother Bernard. "See what a good brother the Lord has sent us," exclaimed Francis: and then they had their first meal together, eating and conversing merrily.[1] When they had eaten, Francis took Giles into the city to procure him a habit like to his own. The novice marched along in great content of soul; but the awe and reverence of the day were upon him. They met a poor woman on the road who cried out for an alms. Francis having nothing he could give, passed on silently; but still the woman pleaded. Giles was troubled, being wishful to give the woman something, yet waiting to receive the word from Francis. At the third pleading, Francis turned to him sweetly and said: "Let us give this poor woman thy cloak": and Giles in great gladness took off his cloak and gave it, and in the giving felt so deep a comfort of spirit as no words could express. The same day Francis gave him the livery of Poverty: and that was Giles' second great happiness in one day.[2]

Exactly in what order the other disciples came in these first days it is impossible to say.[3] One there was, Philip

[1] *Vita B. Fr. Ægidii*, loc. cit. pp. 39-40.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 40-1; *Anon. Perus* in *Acta SS.* 4 October, Vol. II, p. 587; cf. 3 Soc. 44.

[3] It is difficult to reconcile the order of the first companions given in the legends. The 3 Soc. gives the first six as Bernard, Peter, Giles, Sabbatino, Morico, and John de Capella.

So also in *Anon. Perus.*, *Acta SS.* loc. cit. p. 584. Celano puts Bernard, Peter, and Giles, respectively second, third, and fourth. He then speaks of Philip as making the brethren *seven* in number: but whether he includes St. Francis in the seven is not clear, though at first sight he seems to do so. St. Bonaventure, after speaking of Bernard, says that *five* other men were called, and thus "the number of *six* sons of Francis was complete". Is he following Celano or the 3 Soc., or giving an independent account?

Bartholomew of Pisa in *De Conformit.* (*Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 177) gives the order thus: Bernard da Quintavalle, Peter Cathanii, Giles, Sabbatino, Morico, John de Capella, Philip the Long, John da S. Costanzo, Barbaro, Bernard de Viridante, Angelo Tancredi, Sylvester.

surnamed "the Long," whose eloquence in after years was such that it was said of him: "the Lord touched his lips with a cleansing fire, that he might speak of God in most sweet and honeyed words; and although he had not studied the Holy Scriptures in the schools, yet did he so understand and interpret them, that he became a true disciple of those whom the princes of the Jews alleged to be simple and unlettered".[1] Another was that Sylvester the priest whom we have met at the distribution of Bernard's wealth.

The part he took on that occasion might hardly mark him out for a future companion in the Court of Poverty. But at heart Sylvester was not ungenerous; and his life was blameless. He was of those who approved of Francis' zeal in repairing the churches; but at first he much doubted the wisdom of his consorting with beggars and his total disregard of the conventions of ordinary society: to him it seemed a tempting of Providence or a young man's wilfulness;[2] and perhaps too he did not approve of lay-evangelists: often indeed they became fire-brands and heretics. So when he saw the money a-going in foolish recklessness he saw no reason why he should not have his own in payment for the stones he had formerly given. And yet being a man of some spirituality, in spite of himself, he grew ashamed when Francis so freely poured the money into his hands; and when he went home his soul was troubled; nor could he banish the sense that this reckless generosity was more akin to the spirit of Christ than was his own prudence in which he began to detect a latent love of money such as he himself perhaps had frequently upbraided in the lives of others. Then one

[1] I Celano, 25; *Actus S. Franc.* I. 6. Concerning Philip the Long, cf. Chron. Jordani in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 5.

[2] *Leg. Maj.* III. 5.

night he had a dream. It seemed to him that a huge dragon was surrounding the city and threatening it with destruction; but whilst he was trembling for the result, Francis appeared, and from his mouth there came a golden cross which reached to the heavens and extended on each side to the limits of the earth: and the dragon seeing this, was afraid and fled away. Three nights that same dream came to him and Sylvester could no longer hesitate to take it as a warning from God. He sought out Francis and related his dream, and not long afterwards he joined the company.[1] He became a lover of solitude, giving himself much to contemplation and prayer.

Of the remaining first neophytes, one, Morico by name, came from the leper hospital of San Salvatore. He was of the nursing brotherhood of the Crucigeri: whom Francis had tended in a sickness.[2] Another was from Rieti: his name was Angelo Tancredi and he was a most courteous and gentle knight in the world before he became a knight of Poverty.[3] Then there was Barbaro, who some years afterwards went with Francis on a missionary journey to the East;[4] and yet another whose name became a warning to the brethren, for he turned recreant in the end and came by a bad end: he was John de Capella, a man who loved novelties and his own will.[5]

[1] *Leg. Maj.* III. 5; 3 Soc. 31; II Celano, 109; *Actus S. Franc.* I. 41-43.

[2] 3 Soc. 35; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 8. Cf. *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 59, *et passim.*

[3] Cf. *Speculum Perfectionis* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 85, p. 167.

[4] *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 177. Cf. II Celano, 155; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 51.

[5] 3 Soc. 35. Cf. *Actus S. Franc.* I. 3; XXXV. 10. *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. pp. 494, 178, 440, 193. Some authors think him the same as John de Compello, mentioned in Chron. Jordani, *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 5.

Thus, within a few months from the day he changed his habit, did Francis find himself the leader of a small group of disciples. They had come to him without his seeking, drawn by a kinship of spirit. But as each came it was to him a new joy; for he saw in their coming the beginning of a world regained to the Lord Christ and the Lady Poverty.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEYS.

Events had moved rapidly since that day of St. Mathias, and still more rapidly since the morning when Bernard had distributed his goods to the poor in the Piazza San Giorgio: just as after the pause in the springtime the hedges suddenly expand in a tumult of bloom. From a recluse, Francis had been transformed into an apostle: he was now the leader of a knightly company of holy poverty. The zeal of an apostle was upon him, urging him to carry his good news abroad and win souls to his Lord's allegiance. Hardly had Bernard, Peter, and Giles put on their vesture of poverty than Francis must lead them out to fulfil their mission. Himself and Giles took a road which led across the mountains into the March of Ancona: the destination of the other two is not recorded. As Francis went along he sang in a loud voice in the Provençal tongue, of the goodness of God Most High: so gleeful and joyous he was in his love of poverty. Already he beheld this company of the Lady Poverty, like a goodly order of knighthood, being filled with generous souls and traversing the world with its message of penance and love and peace. "This order of ours," he said to Giles, "is like unto a fisherman who casts his net into the water and takes in an abundant draught of fish; and he casts back the small fish into the water and chooses the large ones for his baskets." And

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Giles knew what he would signify: that only the generous and large-hearted were fitted for this new life. They did not preach any formal discourse, but as they passed through the walled villages and cities they stopped when they met the people, and Francis exhorted them in homely simple words to fear and love God and do penance for their sins: and Giles standing aside would quickly urge the people to listen to Francis' words, for that he was a man who spoke well. Often enough the villagers and townsmen were in no mood to listen: they had no wish to be preached at, and grew impatient of these strangers. Some looked upon them as poor fools; others, as fanatics. Others again shook their heads and were frankly at a loss how to take them, like him who was heard to remark: "either they are saints or they are stark mad". Their unusual dress and unkempt appearance frightened some: young women seeing them approach, would run quickly away, thinking them wizards or men with an evil eye, who would cast a spell upon them. Altogether the journey seemed fruitless of any good result; but Francis was never one to bargain for results: he went as his faith urged him leaving results to follow in God's own time. A loyal knight must follow the quest, not reckoning the consequences of his toil so much as the duty to undertake it. Thus Francis and Giles toured the March of Ancona and then returned to the Porziuncola.[1] It was then that Sabbatino, Morico, and John de Capella, all men of Assisi, joined the company. Their

[1] 3 Soc. 33. No other legend mentions this journey into the March of Ancona; but there is no reason to doubt its authenticity. True, Celano (I Celano, 28) relates the similitude of the fisherman in connexion with later incidents; but it is evident that Celano in this place is not following a chronological order, but is simply summing up the events which happened in the days before the approbation of the Rule, with a view to set forth St. Francis' spirit of prophecy.

coming was made remarkable by an upheaval of feeling on the part of the citizens against Francis and his brethren. At first the novelty of a reputable citizen like Bernard da Quintavalle, distributing all his wealth to the poor, had been an excitement not to be quickly laughed down. After all if two or three men care to act in the teeth of common sense and play the saint, what did it matter? It was but an interlude in the serious business of life. Their relatives naturally would resent such doings, but one or two families do not make the city. And then in some vague indefinite way that wholesale renouncement of Bernard had touched the conscience of the people. The appeal to the Gospel, so dramatically enacted under their very eyes, for the moment silenced the prudence of the world and inclined the Assisians to worship. Love of an excitement, reverence and cynicism all went to make the city tolerant. But when, as the days went on, the movement lost its first novelty and stage-illusion and the citizens began to feel its presence in their daily life, as a thing asserting itself in their very homes and making a demand not only on their emotion but also on their conscience, a reaction took place. Here were men putting new ideas into the minds of one's acquaintances and relatives, at variance with the accepted order of things; which ideas were making themselves subtly felt at inconvenient moments, keeping one man away from the riotous feast, detaching another from a family feud, and everywhere creating an element of hesitation and doubt in society. And soon it began to be said in the city that it was all very well for men to give their own property to the poor, but it was monstrous to expect the citizens afterwards to support them. The clamour broke loose when Sabbatino and the other two went to swell the number of these new mendicants. The citizens now stoutly refused to give them any-

thing. Francis entering the city to beg, was received with insults and sarcasm. Had he been less sure of his mission this moment might have been fraught with irreparable mischief. The malcontent citizens had a show of reason in their clamour. He was taking men from their families and civic duties and casting them penniless and homeless upon the world; wasting the family inheritance and making his associates a burden to the people from whose midst they had gone out. To the man in the street it was surely idealism run mad. At this juncture even those who had hitherto stood by Francis, began to doubt and counsel compromise. He was letting loose a flood he might not be able to direct. It was time to pause and consider whither things were moving.

The bishop sent for Francis, and counselled him to reconsider his way of life. It seemed hardly prudent, the bishop urged, to gather men together without any provision for their bodily needs. To practise poverty was all quite right: but the monks did that and yet had means to live upon. What if the people refused to support him by their alms? Must they die of starvation? And how could a number of men live without a house of their own?

It was a difficult moment for Francis. Bishop Guido had been his friend and counsellor from the beginning and had shielded him in time of distress: and in his heart Francis was deeply grateful. Yet not for an instant did he hesitate. "My lord," he replied, "if we keep property we shall need arms to defend ourselves and we shall be continually involved in litigation and feuds; and this will oftentimes prevent us from loving God and our neighbour: therefore do we desire to possess no temporal goods in this world." The reply struck home; for none knew better than Bishop Guido how the temporalities of churches and abbeys were a constant and

increasing cause of trouble between the clergy and the people, and between the clergy themselves. His own episcopate was marred by frequent and acrimonious quarrels over property with the commune and the religious houses in his diocese.[1] So he refrained from urging his counsel, convinced perhaps in his heart that God was here working in new ways, the revealing of which must be left to time. Francis therefore returned to his waiting brethren, with his liberty intact and with the bishop's blessing if not with his unreserved approval.[2]

During the next few months the brethren fashioned themselves in the spirit and exercises of their vocation without any notable incident breaking the even tenor of their lives. It can hardly be said that they had a home in the ordinary sense of the word; but the Porziuncola was their retreat and meeting-place and there they had a small temporary shelter which Francis had built in the first days when Bernard and Peter and Giles came to him.[3]

Their days were spent in the service of others. If they were not on a journey bearing witness to the Gospel, they were tending the lepers in the hospitals or assisting the farmers in the fields or doing other menial service in return for their food.[4] Before the day's toil began there was the labour of the night: the service of the spirit alone in its communion with God. For after a few hours' sleep, whilst yet the world slept on, they rose and gave themselves to prayer, the inti-

[1] Cf. Horoy, *Honorii III opera*, tom I. col. 163, 200.

[2] 3 Soc. 35.

[3] 3 Soc. 32: "*Et fecerunt ibi unam domunculam in qua aliquando pariter morarentur*".

[4] Concerning the primitive life of the friars, cf. 1 Celano, 39-41 *seq.*; 3 Soc. 36-44; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 55; *Vita B. Fr. Aegidii*, pp. 41-3; *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. 207-20.

mate prayer of the heart. At these times they drew as nigh as they could to the eternal mysteries, searching out their own moral weaknesses and strengthening themselves in the hope and comfort which was given them. They were but mortal men and none knew it better than themselves. They had launched out into the deep at the word of the Master and bravely they were holding on their course, but often it was with a fear at their heart lest they should fail.

The more the nobility of their calling came home to their understanding, the more acutely they felt their several weaknesses. There was Brother Bernard who was constantly trembling for fear of his own constancy;[1] Brother Peter was liable to hesitations of worldly prudence;[2] nor was Giles, the mystic, immune from the attractions of the earth.[3] Each had his own particular care and moral danger-point against which they must strengthen their souls. But when they were with men, even their own brethren, they seldom let any sign of their soul's struggle appear, at least not in any mark of sadness or weariness. Such knowledge as they had of each other's struggle came to them by their mutual sympathy and fraternal understanding or in the personal aloofness with which men seek counsel concerning their innermost need. But the gladness and peace which they possesed abundantly, notwithstanding their several temptations, they shared freely. They were bound to each other not only by their common faith in Poverty but by a strong mutual affection, such as comes to men who are wholly and simply given to a common faith and who have no interest which can separate them from each other. Great was their joy when after being parted from each other by reason of some journey, they

[1] Cf. II Celano, 48. [2] *Ibid.*, 67.
[3] Cf. *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 209 *et passim.*

came together again. At such times, says one who knew them, "they were filled with such gladness and rejoicing at again beholding each other, that they remembered nought of what they had suffered from evil men".[1] Perhaps the opposition they met with in the world, made them the more appreciative of each other's welcome.

Amongst them all Francis was as the angel of the house, ever watchful to assist and encourage each in his peculiar need as well as to direct the common purpose. He was gifted with a noble watchfulness for those who depended upon him,[2] and the brethren confided in him with unhesitating simplicity, revealing to him their inmost thoughts and temptations: but oftentimes they had no need to speak, so well he read their souls.

And as it was when they were at home with Francis in their retreat at the Porziuncola, so too was it when they were sent on a journey into a neighbouring district to bear witness to the Gospel they had received. Wherever they went they had a care for the lepers they met on the way; they shared the labour of the poor; sought shelter at night in outhouses or in the servants' quarters or in the porches of houses or churches;[3] begged their bread from door to door when they did not receive it in return for their work; exhorted men to good living and God-loving ways: but they would seek out solitary places for their hours of prayer. One thing the brethren on these journeys would often miss, the joy and encouragement of Francis' presence. Not infrequently they were taken for fools or knaves and treated accordingly. At

[1] 3 Soc. 41.

[2] "*Felici semper curiositate in subditis ferebatur*" is the inimitable phrase of Celano (I Celano, 51).

[3] 3 Soc. 38; *Anon. Perus*, loc. cit. p. 584.

such times they called to mind the teaching of Francis, and reflecting on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, nerved themselves to patient meekness. And this came the more readily to them, because under the inspiration of Francis their daily life had become to them very vividly a walking in the company of their Divine Master. The Gospel story was to them not a far-off history but an ever-present event, a world-life in which they themselves were partakers. Its actuality lay all around them: by faith they saw the whole earth gathered about the Person of the Christ. When people treated them kindly they instinctively passed on the kindness to Him who was their Life; when they suffered unkindness, they took it as He would take it. They looked upon the world in the light of His purity and loving compassion; they were conscious of His Love for all living things as His own proper domain; and sin grieved them because of the injury it was to Him. And since they were His servants and heralds, their thought was to share His burden of the world's redemption. In this preoccupation of mind and heart they came to lose the manners and habits of the world they had left, and their speech and action as well as their thought and desire became of a piece with their soul's purpose. Francis strove hard that it should be so with them, for he knew that only so could they find the joy of the life they had chosen.

Thus the summer days had passed and the restful autumn time, in practises of prayer, self-discipline, and active service for their fellow-men, and it was now winter,[1] when Francis,

[1] The period of the year for the incidents which follow in the text, is determined by the stories told of the journey of Brothers Bernard and Giles in 3 Soc. 39-40 (cf. "*licet esset magnus frigus*," etc.) and in *Vita B. Fr. Aegidii*, loc. cit. p. 41: "in quo itinere . . . frigus et tribulationem perpessus est".

impelled by the spirit, called the brethren together and proposed a long quest into distant parts. Another companion had meanwhile joined them and they were therefore eight in number.

The brethren were gathered together, probably in the chapel of the Porziuncola, ready to take their departure, when Francis addressed them, a peculiar tenderness in his voice as of a father looking upon his sons going forth to seek their fortunes and that of their house, in the world. It was to be the widest journey they had yet undertaken. In that quick burning way of his, he spoke to them of the Kingdom of God of which, as sons of Poverty, they had become heirs. He besought them never to let their heart's desire get enslaved to the transitory things of the present, but to keep their mind's eye fixed upon the things eternal. Then he reminded them that they were called unto this manner of life not for their own sakes alone but for the saving of the world; wherefore it behoved them to go forth, admonishing men by word and example to do penance for their sins and observe the commandments of God. They were to be gentle and patient, putting their trust in their heavenly Father, and not to be afraid because they were simple and lowly and despised by men; for the Spirit of God would speak in them. "You will find some," he went on to say, "who will be believing, gentle and gracious, who will receive you and your words with joy; but others, and these the greater part, will be unbelieving, proud and blasphemous; they will revile and resist you: and against these you shall speak.[1] Set it therefore in your hearts to bear all things patiently and humbly. Go forth, therefore, my most beloved, two and two unto all parts of the earth, announcing peace and inviting to penance

[1] i.e. their admonitions will be to these a judgment and warning.

and the remission of sins. To those who question you, make answer humbly; bless those who persecute you; give thanks to those who injure and calumniate you, for because of these things an eternal kingdom is prepared for you." When he had finished speaking, the brethren came one by one and knelt before him asking his blessing, and as he gave his blessing to each in turn, he bent down and lifted the brother up and embraced him, saying: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He will sustain thee".[1]

At that the little company parted, going two and two to north and south and east and west. Francis and his companion went south to the valley of Rieti,[2] where in winter the snows lie thickly on the mountain tops: and of what befell them there, we shall shortly hear. Brothers Bernard and Giles were destined for Spain, where they purposed to visit the shrine of the apostle St. James at Compostella.[3] Of the destination of the others there is no record.

Of this journey of the brethren we are told: "When the brethren came upon a church or a cross, they bowed in prayer and said devoutly: 'We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee in all Thy churches that are in all the world, for that by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world'; [4] for they believed they had come upon a dwelling place of the Lord [5]

[1] 3 Soc. 36; I Celano, 29; *Leg. Maj.* III. 7.

[2] Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1209.

[3] I Celano, 30; *Vita B. Fr. Ægidii*, loc. cit.

[4] Celano says they said this prayer together with the *Pater Noster*, since they were as yet ignorant of the Divine Office (I Celano, 45). The Fribourg codex of the *Liber de Laudibus* says the brethren recited three Paters for each hour of the office, and it adds that Francis made this rule in order not to impede private and mental prayer. Cf. Bern. a Bessa, *Lib. de Laudibus*, ed. Hilarinus a Lucerna, p. 9, n. 1; Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1210.

[5] So I translate "locum Domini," in accordance with mediaeval monastic language.

wherever they found be it only a cross. All who saw them marvelled exceedingly, for that in habit and manner of life they were unlike all others and seemed like men from the hills. Into whatsoever place they entered, were it a city or walled town or a farm or a house, they brought the message of peace, encouraging all to fear and love the Creator of heaven and earth and keep His commandments. Some heard them gladly; others, contrariwise, mocked them, and by many they were asked whence they came and of what Order they were. And although it was toilsome to answer so many questions, they nevertheless in simplicity acknowledged that they were penitents, natives of the city of Assisi: for as yet their Order was not confirmed as a religion.[1] Many thought them deceivers or fools, nor would they receive them into their houses lest being thieves they might by stealth carry off their goods. Wherefore in many places, after injuries had been done them, they would shelter in the porches of churches or houses."[2]

This description of the reception of the brethren on their journeys finds its echo in the records of many journeys to come, as we shall have occasion to note in the course of this history. The friars did not at once become the heroes of the people amongst whom they appeared. The chronicler just quoted then goes on to tell of what befell Brothers Bernard and Giles in the city of Florence, to which city they had come on their way to Spain. "About this time two of these [brethren] were at Florence, and they went through the city begging for a lodging, yet could find none. Now coming to a certain house which had an oven in the porch they said

[1] "Religio" in mediaeval language signifies a form of religious life approved by the Church.

[2] 3 Soc. 37-8.

one to the other: 'Here we might take shelter'. They therefore besought the mistress of the house to receive them within the house, and when she refused they said humbly that at least she might permit them to rest that night near the oven. This she granted; but when her husband came and found them in the porch, he called his wife and said to her: 'Wherefore hast thou granted these ribalds shelter in our porch?' she replied that she had been unwilling to receive them into the house but had allowed them to lie outside the porch where they could steal nothing but the firewood. The husband therefore would not allow that any shelter should be given them, although the cold was very great, since he took them to be ribalds and thieves. So all that night until the morning they lay near the oven, sleeping lightly enough; warmed only by heat divine and covered only by the shelter of Lady Poverty: and then they went to the nearest church to hear the morning office.

"When day had come, the woman went to the same church, and seeing there those brethren devoutly continuing in prayer, she said within herself: 'Were these men ribalds and thieves as my husband said, they would not thus continue reverently in prayer'. And whilst she was pondering thus, behold a man named Guido was bestowing alms upon the poor who were waiting in that church, and when he came to the brethren and would give them both money, as he gave the others, they refused the money and would not take it. But he said to them: 'Wherefore do you, being poor, not take money as do the others?' Brother Bernard replied: 'It is true that we are poor; but poverty is not a hard thing to us as it is to these other poor; for by God's grace, Whose counsel we have fulfilled, we have made ourselves poor of our own accord'. At this the man marvelled, and asking

them if they had ever possessed anything, he learned from them that they had had much property but for the love of God had given all to the poor . . . Wherefore the said woman, pondering how that the brethren would not take the money, went to them and said that she would gladly receive them into her house, if they would come thither for the sake of being her guests. To whom they humbly answered: 'The Lord repay thee for thy goodwill'. But the aforesaid man, hearing that the brethren had not been able to find a lodging, brought them into his house, saying: 'Behold here a lodging made ready for you by the Lord; abide therein according to your good pleasure'; and they giving thanks to the Lord, remained with him some days, edifying him both by example and by word in the fear of the Lord, so that afterwards he bestowed much of his wealth upon the poor."[1] Of Brother Giles this also is told, that meeting a poor man on the way he was struck with pity at his scanty clothing, and having only one tunic of his own, he gave the man his hood, and himself went hoodless for twenty days, suffering much from the cold.[2]

Francis, as we have said, went to the mountain valley of Rieti, which lies to the south beyond the valley of Spoleto:[3] and here there came to him a wonderful grace. Ever since his conversion from the world there had been a mist in his joy whenever he thought of the neglected years which had gone before; and this sorrow had become more and more

[1] 3 Soc. 39-40. I have omitted, as not needful to this narrative, a passage in which occurs these words descriptive of Brother Bernard: "*qui primo pacis et pœnitentiæ legationem amplectens, post sanctum Dei cucurrit*". Readers of Dante will recognize the source of the verses in the *Divina Commedia*, canto XI. lines 79-81. Cf. *Anon. Perus.* in *Acta SS.* loc. cit. p. 585.

[2] *Vita B. Fr. Ægidii*, loc. cit. p. 41.

[3] Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1209.

poignant as the days went on. Indeed during these past few months Francis had been experiencing to the uttermost that self-humiliation which comes with the first consciousness of a high spiritual destiny. In his large unselfishness he could not but rejoice as the work of the Lord unfolded itself in the coming of his companions. At times he would sing aloud the praises of God in sheer gratitude and exultancy of spirit at the thought of the grace which was given them. Then, becoming conscious of himself, he would shrink back, amazed and fearful, oppressed with the sense of his own deficiency, and his eyes and heart would weep for the years when he might have been fitting himself for the task which God had laid upon him. And then there would come upon him the awful dread lest the misspent past should take its revenge and be his undoing in the end.

In such tempest of self-abasement he found himself one day as he was praying in a solitude above the town of Poggio-Bustone, on the borders of the Abruzzi; whither he had come in his tour of the country of Rieti. It is a spot of the earth which induces one to deep ponderings, and there is a certain melancholy in its high mountainous seclusion and the dark enclosure of the neighbouring hills.[1]

In very misery Francis had cast himself upon the Divine mercy, repeating time after time in a broken spirit: "O God be merciful to me, a sinner"; for he yet had hope that the all-pitying Redeemer would show mercy and not let His work be frustrated by His servant's unworthiness. But the cup of his humiliation that day was deep and he must drink it to the dregs. Then suddenly there came to him a complete

[1] The grotto in which Francis prayed is a steep climb above the town: it is still a place of pilgrimage. Every Easter Monday the peasantry from all the neighbouring villages march in procession to the grotto and hear mass there.

and indubitable assurance that all his past sins were forgiven him, and that by God's grace he would not fail at the last; and at that same time he saw as in a vision the company of Poverty growing into a large host and subduing the earth; and he knew his quest and leadership would not be fruitless. At that his whole being was changed and he came from his prayer another man; as one who had looked upon the face of God and found his peace there.

Then was his first thought to share his joy with his brethren; for he knew how they too were tried by temptation and how this vision of his, of the increase of their company, would be to them an encouragement. Thereupon he besought God to turn them all back from their journeys and bring them together at the Porziuncola. And it happened that at that same time all the brethren felt a drawing homewards and returned; nor did any of them know why they had at that particular time begun their homeward journey, until Francis told them of his longing for them to return and of his prayer.

So they were once more gathered together when Francis unburdened his mind of his vision, uttering his words as one who has found a great joy. "My most beloved," he said, "be comforted and rejoice in the Lord, and be not sad because you seem to be few. Neither let my simple ways, nor yours, affright you: for the Lord has shown me that He will make us to increase into a great multitude and spread abroad even to the ends of the earth. And that you may be encouraged to advance on your way, I am compelled to tell you what I have seen. Rather would I be silent, but my love compels me to speak. I have seen a great multitude of men coming to us, desiring to put on the habit of our holy vocation and to live under the rule of our blessed religion, and

their sound is in my ears as they come and go under the orders of holy obedience. I have seen the roads from all the nations full of men coming into these parts: the French are coming, the Spaniards are hastening, the Germans and English run, and great is the crowd of them who hurry along speaking other tongues." Then was there great joy in that small company, for all had caught the enthusiasm of their leader and his daring ambition to establish the reign of the crucified Redeemer.[1] There was in their ambition no thought of self. They loved the Lord Christ and hungered to see Him in His poverty and humility, the Lord of the earth; and they loved their fellowmen and yearned that all should share the joy they themselves had found.

But Francis, with all his enthusiasm, was already seeing things with the searching eye of a leader. Much as he rejoiced with the brethren over this coming multitude, yet he did not fail to see that with the crowd would come travail of spirit and a time of trial. Where there is a multitude it cannot be as with a small family united in heart and ruled by one single purpose. "My beloved," he said to his companions, "in these first days of our dwelling together, it is like eating apples all sweet and pleasant to the taste; a little later the apples offered to us will not all be so sweet and pleasant, and in the end some will be of such bitterness that we shall

[1] I Celano, 26-7. Celano relates the incident of St. Francis's assurance of forgiveness and the subsequent address to the brethren, before mentioning the missionary journey of the eight; but, as we have remarked before, he observes a chronological order in his legend, only in a very general sense.

Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1209) accepts the tradition that the assurance of forgiveness came to Francis at Poggio Bustone. Celano moreover relates that the sudden recall of the brethren was due to a vision which Francis had: "*Convenientibus vero in unum, de visione pii pastoris magna gaudia celebrant*," etc., and later: "*Beatus pater coepit eis suum aperire propositum*, etc. (I Celano, 30, 31).

be unable to eat them, though outwardly they will look fair and juicy enough":[1] which words were to prove a true prophecy.

But at present neither Francis nor the brethren were disturbed at any prevision of future troubles. They were yet living in the first absorbing wonderment of their new vocation.

And a blessed thing too is that first wonderment which whilst it lasts is like the vital contentment of a perfect summer's day, transfusing one's dream with a palpitating light; or like the satisfying infinitude of the western sky at sundown when the clouds have widely parted. Such wonderment is the bridal gift of a true love, whether it be the love of man and maid or the mystic love of the soul and its vocation. Out of that wonderment comes the joy and strength of life, whether in the first blithe marches of achievement or in the inevitable stages of hardship and disillusions through which the perfect faith must pass to its triumphant realization. Yet though his heart was not saddened nor his faith daunted, Francis felt the need of establishing his company in a greater security against the dangers to come.

This brotherhood of Poverty was to spread over the earth; it would need some definite pledge of world-wide authority and a definite visible allegiance symbolical of its allegiance to the world's Saviour. Instinctively Francis turned to the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on earth: he should receive in Christ's name, the allegiance of the brotherhood and give it its charter and be its earthly lord and its protector against the evil of the world.

Now it frequently happens that the incidents which immediately determine events fraught with great consequences,

[1] I Celano, 28.

are in themselves trivial: they take their importance from the accumulating expectancy of a movement to which they become a sign. So Francis's decision to seek the Papal sanction and protection for the brotherhood was quickened by the coming of four new postulants. With these the company of Poverty numbered twelve brethren: it was the number of the Apostles. Now, thought Francis, they lacked but one thing to make them like unto the first apostolic college; that one thing being the manifest commission of Christ, which could be given them only by Christ's Vicar. So Francis and the brethren sought direction in prayer and then determined forthwith to set out for Rome and seek the presence of the Pope.

The four new brethren were John of San Constanzo, Barbaro, Bernard de Vigilanzio[1] and the noble knight, Angelo Tancredi who had followed Francis from the Valley of Rieti.[2]

[1] He is variously designated as Bernard de Vigilanzio, Bernard Vigilanzo de Vida, and Bernard de Viridante.

[2] Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1210) tells a story of the coming of Angelo Tancredi which is quite in accord with the character of Francis. Meeting Angelo in the valley of Rieti, Francis accosted him saying: "It is a long time enough that you have carried the belt and sword and spurs of the world. Come with me and I will dub you a knight of the army of Christ." But the source of this story is the *Actus S. Franc. in Valle Reatina*, a fourteenth century compilation of doubtful authority. It has recently been edited by Prof. Pennacchi in *Miscellania Francescana*, Vol. XIII, pp. 6-21.

CHAPTER VII.

POPE INNOCENT APPROVES THE RULE OF THE ORDER.

The days were filled with the temperate heat and sunshine of early spring, and the shortening of the nights was gracious to the scantily clad brethren hastening to Rome. Francis was full of expectancy. In his hands he carried with him the Rule of life which he had written and which was to be the charter of his alliance with the Lady Poverty, and he was confident that the Pope would confirm it: for was not Poverty the bride of Christ in His life on earth, and how then could the Vicar of Christ repel her? One night he had a dream and it seemed to him that he was walking along a road by the side of which stood a tree of noble height and very fair to gaze upon; and when he went and stood beneath it, in wonder at its height and comeliness, of a sudden he himself became so tall that he touched the top of the tree and bent it down to the earth quite easily.[1] Francis related his dream to the brethren, not doubting that God had sent it him to foreshadow the triumph of Poverty. To the eager, intense souls of these men everything indeed in heaven and earth seemed burdened with the destiny of their Lady Poverty: as in truth it was so far as they were concerned, so entirely and simply were they hers.

As they were setting forth on their way to Rome, Francis

[1] I Celano, 33; 3 *Soc.* 53; *Leg. Maj.* III. 8.

had insisted that the brethren should choose one of their number, other than himself, to be their superior on the way. "He shall be our captain and as it were Christ's Vicar to us," he said; "so that wheresoever he shall lead, we will go with him; and where he lodges we will lodge." The choice fell upon Bernard da Quintavalle. Then they took to the road, singing the praises of God as they went along or else conversing with each other upon the things of the spirit which alone seemed to them worthy of many words. At times they would break their journey in some retired spot and give themselves to secret prayer, and when the evening drew in they sought shelter wherever they happened to find themselves. In this fashion they passed down the valley of Spoleto and crossed along the high plateau of Rieti and came into the lowlands of the Roman Campagna and at length found themselves in Rome. For most of them it was their first visit to the Eternal City, and doubtless with that instinct of faith which was so strong in the Catholic people of those days, their first thoughts turned to the tomb of the Apostles in the great church of St. Peter on the Vatican Hill: for it was this which made Rome a holy city and in some sense the home of all Christians. As the brethren passed through the streets the people would momentarily wonder from what province these strangely garbed men had come, wholly unaware that they were looking upon men who were shortly to set the whole Christian world by the ears and to be the beginning of a moral revolution before which even Rome must bow in reverent homage. But the Romans had seen too many strange penitents and reformers come to their city and pass away again forgotten or discredited, to be deeply interested at the appearance of any new comers, however strange might be their garb or conduct. And so these twelve brethren might

make their way through the streets until they came to St. Peter's without arousing any but a passing wonder. They themselves were too engrossed in their sacred mission and in their reverence for the ground they trod, to take note of the passers by. Nor was there such a marked temperamental difference between the two cities—the one they had come to and the other they had left—to make them feel an entire strangeness even had they been less absorbed in their own affair. The contrast between Assisi and Rome which strikes one so forcibly to-day was not so palpable then. The pilgrim who now passes from the Eternal City to the city of Umbria, passes from the great highway where the world jostles painfully but inevitably against the spirit, into an old-world nook where the spirit broods in peace over the earth. Rome stands to-day, as ever in its history, as a spirit struggling with the world; Assisi is as a spirit which has overcome and is now at rest. But in the thirteenth century Assisi was a hustling busy republic with an intensely aggressive consciousness of its own, with its bishop's court and its senate and its market-place and its political parties, all very much alive and emulous in some measure even of the city of Rome in its institutions and ambitions. Life in Rome was on a larger scale, but it was not so different in quality or character that a citizen of Assisi could not easily fall in with its main preoccupations and habits. Even so Rome was such as to strike the imagination of a citizen of far greater cities than Assisi, and never more so than at this very period when Innocent III was bringing most of the Christian kingdoms into even temporal vassalage to the Holy See. There was no movement in the life of Christendom, whether in imperial or national politics, or in the domain of thought, or in the strictly ecclesiastical sphere, which was not in some way or other brought to the

Pope's council-board; and Innocent wielded his growing authority with a noble magnificence which took account of the smaller things even as the greater.[1] No man perhaps has ever been the ruler of the earth as he was; he schooled kings and imposed governments on peoples, and checked heresy, and did all a legislator could to reform morals: and all these activities were manifest in the gatherings of men at his court. There all that was most alive in Christendom might be found appealing, arguing or bowing before the Pope's command.

To many men Innocent III has appeared merely as an ambitious statesman and theocrat, whose ruling passion was to extend the dominion of the Papacy in temporal affairs; they picture him skilfully playing off one political party against another or subduing with his iron resolution and sweeping statesmanship the rebellious secular powers. But there was another side to the character of Innocent. He was a deeply religious man, ascetic in his personal conduct and with a yearning desire to purify the Christian world and make its peoples, socially and individually, more conformed to the law of Christ.[2] Behind all his political ambitions for the Church was the aspiration to leave the Christian world purer and more godly than he found it; and it can safely be said that he viewed the extension of the authority of the Papacy in temporal affairs as a means to the world's purification. He may have been right or wrong in thinking that temporal power would strengthen the Holy See for its spiritual mission; about that men will argue as long as the world lasts. But there can be no doubt that the ultimate purpose of the great

[1] Cf. A. Luchaire, *Innocent III: Rome et l'Italie*, p. 233 *seq.*

[2] He was the author of an ascetical treatise *De contemptu mundi* which was for long in great vogue. His sermons breathe a spirit of burning piety.

Pope was to create a theocracy of the Christian nations under whose sway the Gospel would be better realized in all spheres of the world's life. Nobody was more conscious than himself that this purification must be begun in the ranks of the clergy: and he was not blind to the inherent strength of the reforming sects which, however troublesome they might be to the authorities, and even heretical as they frequently became, yet pointed with undeniable though bitter truth to the radical evil of luxury and secular greed which had fastened upon laity and clergy alike in the higher ranks of society.[1]

The almost utter hopelessness of the task of reform which he had set himself, made the sadness of his days. Yet he never relinquished his efforts. He chose as cardinals men of like mind in this matter with himself. If he fostered a crusade to crush by force of arms the wide-spreading sect of the Albigenses, it must be remembered that this sect was political as well as religious, and menaced established authority both civil and ecclesiastical. Even here Innocent did not trust to the secular arm alone, but endeavoured to arouse the monastic orders to meet the heretical movements in spiritual warfare by sending forth itinerant preachers in whom sound orthodoxy would be strengthened by a severe asceticism and blameless life.[2]

[1] Innocent in 1201 approved the Rule of the Humiliati—an orthodox society which was nevertheless suspected by many of the bishops; he also received the submission of Durandus d'Huesca in 1209 and of Bernhard Primus in 1210, and commissioned them to continue their preaching. Cf. A. Luchaire, *Innocent III: la Croisade des Albigeois*, p. 105; Migne, *Innocentii III Regest.* Lib. XII, LXIX.

Innocent's more pacific attitude of mind towards the heretics is in striking contrast to the unsparing ferocity of some of the bishops. Cf. Migne, op. cit. Lib. II, CCXXVIII; A. Luchaire, op. cit. p. 58 *seq.*

[2] Innocent would gladly have avoided recourse to the secular arm, though when he found pacific measures unavailing, he fostered the crusade with characteristic energy. Cf. A. Luchaire, loc. cit.

But the dead hand of formalism weighed heavily upon the Pope's efforts to stem the tide of the heretical reforming movements: they grew in strength and audacity in spite of crusades and delegated preachers. Even within the confines of the Papal territories the heretics bade defiance to the Pope.[1] The truth was that the reforming movements, whether heretical or orthodox (and they were mostly heretical or suspect) voiced a vital discontent which was felt by all the more spiritually-minded Catholics, even by the Pope himself. Merely repressive or argumentative measures can never take away a vital discontent, and whilst that remains, heresy will always be latent or active until the discontent gives place to a new spiritual contentment or whittles away into sheer spiritual indifference.

As yet the Church had not been able to put forth any convincing fact which would make people recognize that it contained within itself the satisfying truth for which the soul of Christendom was ahungered. What this truth was, men could only tell in a negative fashion: it was not found in any of the actual ecclesiastical institutions or tendencies which they saw with their eyes; and not finding there what they wanted, they easily concluded that the whole ecclesiastical system was altogether wrong, and a mere bondage of the spirit. Nor could the authorized preachers, even the most sympathetic, convince them otherwise. These, the sympathetic preachers, might deplore the evils in the Church, and argue that these evils were merely the wounds which wicked men had inflicted upon the pure body of Christ: but

[1] Both at Viterbo and Orvieto the Patarini were strong enough to elect members of their sect as consuls. Cf. Migne, *Innocentii III Regest.* Lib. II, 1, CCVII.; Lib. VIII, CCLVIII. Cf. *Acta SS. Maii*, tom. v, p. 86 *seq.* A. Luchaire, *Innocent III: Rome et l'Italie*, pp. 84-91.

the wounds were visible, gaping before the common eye. Some held fast to the faith of the preachers, and set themselves to wait prayerfully till the mystery should be cleared. But these were the few. Many more looked on, cynical or indifferent, while the preachers preached. Meanwhile the heretics were aggressive and made headway with the people. Perhaps to some of the waiting believers there came a vision of the prophet who was to bring freedom and joy to their souls, a man not tied to the traditions which hampered the liberty and dimmed the sight of the orthodox preachers, but one who with the simplicity of genius would draw forth the truth in its living beauty from the encasement of the traditions, and reveal it to orthodox and heretic alike as the legitimate offspring of the Catholic Faith. But in what fashion such a one would appear, and how he would present himself to the world, would remain even to the visionaries a mystery: for no man yet has painted the coming dawn.

It is quite possible that Pope Innocent had had his visions of the needed reformer: for Innocent was a mystic as well as a genius, and to both is given a liberty of mind which the established conventions cannot contain; yet when the moment of recognition came, the Pope at first could not see clearly and Francis met with a rebuff.

It was in the corridor of the Lateran palace that these two men first met. Pope Innocent was walking to and fro, his mind engrossed in his schemes, when Francis, who in his simplicity had thought to seek out the Pope direct, appeared before him and began to set forth his petition. But the Pope, thinking him a mere fanatic, curtly bade him begone.[1]

[1] *Vide* the addition to the *Leg. Maj.* III. 9 [ed. Quaracchi, 1898, p. 28, n. 1], by Jerome of Ascoli.

Jerome was St. Bonaventure's successor in the Generalate of the Order.

Francis went out, and shortly afterwards had the good fortune to meet the Bishop of Assisi, who was then on a visit to the Papal Court. The bishop had no knowledge of Francis' coming, and meeting him unexpectedly in the Eternal City, was at first alarmed. He thought that perhaps these penitents had quitted Assisi for good. But when Francis had told his purpose he at once promised his support.

Bishop Guido knew quite well the difficulties which would beset Francis and his petition. One needs a friend at court if one is to be heard there; and besides it was already being said that there were too many of these new penitential fraternities springing up, much to the detriment of the older monastic Orders.[1] So like a prudent man of affairs, the bishop set himself to gain the interest of an influential cardinal. None, he knew, would be more likely to befriend these penitents of his, than the Cardinal John of St. Paul, Bishop of Sabina. This prelate was a man of saintly life, noted amongst all the reforming cardinals of Innocent's Court, for his personal detachment from the world and his spiritual mind. To him then Francis was now introduced. The cardinal was already well disposed, having heard from Bishop Guido all about the wonderful renunciation and zeal of this new reformer; and he must have heard too of his reverence for the bishop and clergy, which was something unusual in the reformers of the time. Yet with the native conservatism of a statesman, he could not see why a new Order should be created: better surely

He said he received his knowledge of this incident from the Pope's nephew. Cf. *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 365. Matthew of Paris (*Hist.* ed. Watts, p. 340) relates a curious story how the Pope, on first meeting Francis, bade him "go and roll himself in the mire with the pigs".

[1] Five years later the Fourth Lateran Council forbade the institution of new Orders.

would it be for these men to enter an established Order: it would be the safer course and their fervour would help to bring the older Orders back to their first perfection. His advice, therefore, was that they should lay aside their petition and enter a monastery. But Francis was firm—sweetly and humbly firm—in his conviction that God had called him neither to the monastic nor the eremitical life as already established, but to a new and simple observance of the Gospel. And after a few days the cardinal too was convinced. He saw in these men a spirit different from any he had yet observed, and he felt that here was something new in the designs of God for the Church. With this conviction he determined to bring Francis into the Pope's presence, and to plead his cause.

So once again Francis was at the feet of Pope Innocent; but now the way had been prepared and the stern countenance of the great Pontiff was intent to hear what he had to say for himself and his brethren. Quite simply Francis set forth the Rule of life he desired to follow with the Pope's sanction. There was a movement of dissent among the attendant cardinals as Francis proclaimed his purpose to live in absolute poverty without any provision for the morrow save his trust in God's providence and the charity of man; to carry nothing on his journeys through the world nor to resist when an injury should be done to him; to serve his neighbours and to work as the poor, and to eschew all power and authority over others. To some it appeared to wear a dangerous resemblance to the innovations of the reformers; to all it seemed an impossible rule beyond human endurance, to all that is, except the Cardinal John of St. Paul, who rose up to answer the objectors. "If we reject the petition of this poor man," he said, "as something novel and too hard to fulfil,

when all he asks is that the law of life of the Gospel be confirmed unto him, let us beware lest we offend against the Gospel of Christ. For if anyone shall say that in the observance of evangelical perfection and the vow to observe it, there is contained anything new or irrational or impossible of observance, such a one is convicted of a blasphemy against Christ the Author of the Gospel." At that the Pope, in homage to the saintly cardinal, said to Francis: "My son, go and pray to Jesus Christ that He may show us His will; and when we know His will more certainly, we shall the more safely sanction your pious purpose".[1]

It was an anxious moment for the brethren, but Francis was confident. "He ran trustfully to Christ and began to pray, bidding his brethren do the same," says the chronicler. During his prayer this parable came to him as from some interior voice: A certain woman, very poor but beautiful, dwelt in a desert. And there was a king who loved her because of her exceeding beauty. With joy he wedded her and begot of her most handsome sons. Now these sons grew up, nurtured in all gentleness, and then their mother spoke to them, saying: "My dear sons, be not ashamed because you are poor, for you are all the sons of a great king. Gladly therefore go to his court and ask of him whatever is necessary to you." They, hearing these words, marvelled and were glad and being lifted up at this declaration of their royal lineage and knowing themselves to be heirs to the king, esteemed their very need as riches. Boldly they presented themselves before the king, nor were they timid before the face of him whose likeness they bore. And the king recognizing in them the likeness unto himself, wonder-

[1] *Leg. Maj.* III. 9; 3 *Soc.* 47-49; I Celano, 32-33; II Celano, 16; *Anon. Perus.* loc. cit. p. 590.

ingly inquired whose sons they might be. They told him they were the sons of the poor woman who dwelt in the desert. At that the king embraced them and said: "My sons and heirs you are: fear not. If strangers are fed at my table, by a greater right must I nourish them for whom all my possessions are lawfully kept." And afterwards the king gave order unto the woman that she should send to his court all the sons that should be born of her, that they might be nurtured there.[1]

With this parable on his lips, Francis presented himself at the next audience to which he was shortly bidden: adding as he finished the recital: "Holy Father, I am that poor woman whom God so loved and of His mercy hath so honoured".

Pope Innocent listened in astonishment to this troubadour in penitent's garb: it was a new experience even in his full life, and perhaps at that moment the light began to enter the Pontiff's mind and he dimly saw that what the world needed for its purification was the spirit of the troubadour converted to the service of Christ. He now felt a strange drawing to this man whom he had at first repulsed, and a dream he had once had, came back to his mind and seemed to him to be receiving a fulfilment in fact. He had dreamt that the Church of St. John Lateran, the mother church of Christendom, was about to fall, and a religious, small of stature and lowly of appearance was holding it up, by setting his back against it. It seemed to him now that Francis was the man of his dream,[2] and without further hesitation he declared his good-will and gave a verbal sanction to the Rule which had been laid before him. Then Francis promised obedience to the Pope, and when he had thus promised, the

[1] II Celano, 16; 3 Soc. 50; *Leg. Maj.* III. 10; *Anon. Perus, ut supra.*
[2] II Celano, 17; 3 Soc. 51; *Leg. Maj.* III. 10.

Pontiff bade the other brethren promise obedience to Francis. Thus was the Franciscan family formally constituted and provisionally admitted into the law of the Church : for with the cautiousness proper to a statesman, Innocent reserved a more solemn and definite approbation until such time as the new fraternity had proved itself. Finally, Innocent having thus recognized the brethren, gave them his pontifical authority to preach penance to the people ; that is to say, not to expound the dogmas of the faith as did the regular preachers who were trained theologians, but to exhort the people to live well and avoid evil and love God. "Go forth with the Lord, brothers," he said to them, "and as the Lord shall deign to inspire you, do ye preach repentance unto all men. But when God Almighty shall have multiplied you in numbers and in grace, come again to me rejoicing and I will grant more unto you than this and with a greater assurance commit to you greater powers."[1]

That day there was one man at the Papal court who was unfeignedly satisfied with the issue of the brethren's petition. The Cardinal John of St. Paul had, in the few days of their sojourn in Rome, come to hold them in great reverence and affection, and he purposed to take them under his particular protection at the Roman court, and be, as it were, a father under God to these poor men.[2]

[1] I Celano, 33; 3 Soc. 51; *Leg. Maj.* III. 10. The preaching of penance was a recognized faculty in the Middle Ages and was frequently conceded to laymen. Such preaching implied moral exhortations, but excluded the expounding of the articles of faith and the sacraments. *Vide* Letter of Innocent III to the ministers of the Humiliati, "*Incumbit nobis*," 7 June, 1201 (Tiraboschi, *Vetera Humil. Mon.* : I p. 128). Cf. P. Hilarin Felder, *Histoire des Études dans l'ordre Franciscain*, p. 39 *seq.* Pope Innocent had commissioned the Humiliati in 1201; in 1209 he had given an even more general permission to Durandus de Huesca and Bernhard Primus.

[2] Cf. 3 Soc. 48; "*Volebat ex tunc sicut unus de fratribus reputari*".

Before they departed he conferred upon them all the small tonsure,[1] the mark of the clerical state, that thereby they might have the greater freedom and authority in their preaching. But in his heart there was also the desire to wed these joyous, humble penitents to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as an example to other clerics and for the purifying of the clerical order itself.[2]

Here the reader may be curious, as many have been before him, to know more precisely what this Rule was which Pope Innocent sanctioned, and in what manner it was set forth. For the Rule of the Friars Minor underwent many changes and modifications before it was finally sealed with the solemn and written approbation of Pope Honorius III in 1223. That final Rule reflects many issues and experiences in the development of the fraternity, which Francis in these earlier years never contemplated: and in it the fine idealism of his aspiration is somewhat tempered by the exigencies of the world, as pure gold is mixed with harder metal to serve the uses of men. It was indeed necessary to beat out the finer, heroic spirit of the founder of the fraternity with an admixture of more earthly wisdom for the multitude which gathered to him after the first enthusiasm had begun to wane: so only do the idealists retain a following whether in the Church or outside it. But those who love the memory of Francis will always turn to the early days of his story before the world

[1] "Fecit *coronas parvulas* fieri," says St. Bonaventure (*Leg. Maj.* III. 10): evidently as distinguished from the larger monastic tonsure. Even to the end of his days Francis refused to wear the large tonsure: cf. II Celano, 193. Some say that it was at this time that Francis also received the diaconate. Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1210.

[2] A similar thought was in the mind of Cardinal Ugolino later on, when he proposed to take the bishops from the new orders of Franciscans and Dominicans. Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 43.

made his spirit anxious, searching those early years with a wistful tenderness as men always search out the story of youth.

Unhappily the parchment which was inscribed with that early Rule seems not to have been preserved when in later years Francis found it necessary to rewrite his Rule with greater detail; and to-day they who would listen to the Rule which Pope Innocent blessed at the instance of the Cardinal John of St. Paul, must disentangle the primitive passages from the later accumulating additions with which they are conjoined in what came to be known as the "First Rule" or "the Rule of 1221": a compilation which grew out of the primitive Rule and capitular decrees and Papal ordinances and which Francis, with the aid of Brother Cæsar of Speyer, put into its present form in the year 1221.[1] Elsewhere in this book the reader will find an analysis of this compilation,[2] setting forth the component parts in detail, but here we will put down those passages which unhesitatingly we may accept as primitive. A few other regulations there may have been, which now we cannot determine, but they would be of lesser importance, for the Rule as here set down reflects faithfully the life of the first brethren as history records it; and nothing in that life is lacking in the Rule: one is a faithful mirror of the other.

The Primitive Rule, then, began in strict Catholic fashion with the invocation of the most Holy Trinity. A preliminary declaration promised obedience to the Pope, and then the Rule proper ran in this wise:—

[1] This "First Rule" of 1221 must not be confused with the Rule of 1223 above referred to.

[2] *Vide* Appendix I: "The Primitive Rule of St. Francis," pp. 465-476.

The Rule and life of the brothers is this: namely, to live in obedience, in chastity and without property, and to follow the teaching and in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ Who says: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me"; [1] also: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me"; [2] again: "If any man come to Me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple; [3] and everyone that hath left father or mother, brethren or sisters, wife or children, houses or lands, for My sake shall receive a hundred-fold and shall possess life everlasting".[4]

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If anyone by Divine inspiration shall wish to receive this life and shall come to our brethren, let him be received kindly by them. Which being done, he shall sell whatever he possesses and cause it to be given to the poor.

And all the brethren shall be clothed in vile garments and they can patch them with sacking and other rags with the blessing of God; for our Lord says in the Gospel: "They that are in costly apparel and live delicately and who are clothed in soft garments, are in the houses of kings".[5]

None of the brothers shall have any power or domination especially amongst themselves. For so the Lord says in the Gospel: "The princes of the gentiles lord it over them and they that are the greater, exercise power upon them: it shall not be so amongst the brethren; but whosoever will be the greater amongst them let him be their minister and servant;" and "he who is the greater amongst them let him become as the lesser".[6] Neither shall any brother do evil or speak evil unto another; nay rather by the charity of the spirit shall they voluntarily serve and obey each other. And this is the true and holy obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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The brethren who know how to work, shall work and exercise the same craft which they know, if it be not against their soul's salvation and they can honestly exercise it. For the prophet says: "Because that

[1] Matt. xix. 21. [2] Matt. xvi. 24. [3] Luke xix. 26
[4] Cf. Matt. xix. 29. [5] Luke vii. 25. [6] Cf. Matt. xx. 25-27; xxiii. 11.

thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands, blessed art thou and it shall be well with thee;"[1] and the apostle says: "he who will not work, neither let him eat;"[2] and let every man abide in the craft and office wherein he is called.[3] And for their labour they may receive whatever is needful, except money. And should it be necessary, they may go asking alms like other brothers.

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Let all the brothers endeavour to follow in the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ and let them remember that of all the world it behoves them to have nothing save as the Apostle says: "having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content".[4] And they ought to rejoice when they consort with rude and despised persons, with the poor and weak and sick and lepers and those who beg by the wayside. And should it be necessary they may go begging.

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And all the brothers shall beware lest they calumniate anybody, and let them not contend in words;[5] nay rather let them have a care to keep silence whenever the Lord grants them this grace. Neither let them argue between themselves nor with others, but let them have a care to reply humbly: "We are unprofitable servants".[6]

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When the brethren go through the world they shall carry nothing by the way, neither purse nor scrip nor bread nor money nor staff; and into whatsoever house they enter they shall first say: Peace be to this house; and in the same house remaining, they shall eat and drink what things are set before them.[7] And let them not resist evil;[8] but if anyone should strike them on the cheek let them offer to him the other; and if anyone take away their garment, let them not forbid him the tunic also. They shall give to everyone who asketh them; and if anyone take away their goods let them not ask again.[9]

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All the brethren shall be Catholics and live and speak after the manner of Catholics. But should anyone of them stray from the Catholic faith or life in word or indeed and will not amend, he shall be altogether

[1] Psalm CXXVII. 2. [2] 2 Thess. III. 10. [3] Cf. 1 Cor. VII. 24.
[4] 1 Tim. VI. 8. [5] Cf. 2 Tim. 14. [6] Luke XVII. 10.
[7] Luke IX. 3; X. 4-8. [8] Cf. Matt. V. 39. [9] Cf. Luke VI. 29-30.

cast out from our fraternity. And all clerics and all religious let us hold as our lords in respect of those things which regard the salvation of the soul and do not deviate from our religion;[1] and their order and office and ministration we must hold in reverence in the Lord.

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And this and similar exhortation and praise, all my brothers may announce with the blessing of God, whenever it shall please them and amongst whatsoever people: "Fear and honour, praise and bless, give thanks unto and adore the Lord God Almighty in Trinity and Unity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Creator of all". Do penance;[2] bring forth fruits worthy of penance,[3] for know that ye shall all quickly die. Give and it shall be given unto you.[4] Forgive and you shall be forgiven.[5] And if you will not forgive men their sins neither will the Lord forgive you your sins.[6] Confess all your sins.[7] Blessed are they who shall die in penance for they shall be in the kingdom of heaven. Woe to those who shall not die in penance, because they shall be the children of the devil, whose works they do,[8] and they shall go into everlasting fire.

Beware and abstain from all evil and persevere unto the end in good.

Then followed a brief exhortation to the brethren faithfully to hold and guard all these words; and the Rule ended with the doxology: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

And now perhaps, reader, you will better understand and, maybe, sympathize with the hesitating prelates who heard this Rule put forth as the constitution of a new society. But to rightly appreciate their hesitation and dissent, you must remember the men who stood before them with this Rule as

[1] The word "religion" here means the Rule of the Order.
[2] Matt. III. 2. [3] Luke III. 8. [4] Luke VI. 38.
[5] Luke VI. 37. [6] Mark XI. 26. [7] James V. 16.
[8] Cf. John VIII. 44.

their expected charter. They were not trained legalists who, it might be assumed, would interpret the simple heroism of these naked Gospel precepts into some compromise with the weakness of human nature. Quite evidently they took the words literally and without any gloss. They had already shown their mettle; had utterly renounced all their property and become common labourers and beggars; had put aside all titles of honour and would not willingly exercise any authority or hold power over others; had already shown themselves non-resisters to the evil men did to them. And upon these principles they would found a new society!

Nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of every thousand would pause before approving of such a scheme. It is one thing to set heroic laws as counsels for individual perfection; quite another thing to bind a body of men with the State's sanction, to the observance of uttermost perfection: and such it seemed was what Francis asked. Politicians and men of affairs do not readily make alliance with extreme and unconventional courses or with policies which contemplate no looking backwards. Such courses and policies are the heritage of poets and prophets and other idealists, or of mystics and saints.

Fortunately for Francis, the poet and saint, there was the saintly Cardinal of St. Paul; still more fortunate that Pope Innocent and many of his counsellors were men in whom the mysticism of religion blended curiously with the statesmanship of the world.

The Primitive Rule was, in fact, the programme of an adventure of faith; and it was in the spirit of high adventure that Pope Innocent approved it. But Innocent himself had ever been bold in adventure for the faith which was in him, as his successors learned when they came to steer the heri-

tage he left them, amidst the shoals of secular diplomacy. And stern, forbidding in his aloofness, and magnificent as the pontiff was, he perhaps felt a certain spiritual kinship with the gentle, lowly Francis, in the adventurousness of faith which was common to them both.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

RIVO-TORTO.

When Francis and his company left Rome after their reception by Pope Innocent, their one thought was to prove themselves worthy of the Pope's confidence. The graciousness of the Pontiff had warmed and lifted their hearts: they had all the joy of the born soldier in receiving his first commission.

Before leaving the city they had bade adieu at the tombs of the Apostles: then they had turned their faces once more towards Umbria. This time they did not go by the mountain valley of Rieti but they directed their steps across the low country which follows the line of the Tiber till it comes to the valley of the Nera. As they went along, the events of the past few days formed the subject of their conversation, and they discussed amongst themselves the wonderful mercies God had shown them and the Rule they had promised to observe and how best they might fulfil the work committed to them by Christ and His Vicar. So engrossed were they in their talk that they quite forgot the needs of the body, and at midday they found themselves in a lonely spot with no house within sight. They had walked since early morning

and were now quite faint with weariness and hunger. Whilst they were wondering how they might procure some food in this human wilderness suddenly a man approached them carrying some bread which he willingly shared with them. Thus relieved, the brethren saw in the stranger's coming another instance of God's providence, and they continued their journey, still more convinced that God would never fail them in their need.[1]

At length they came into the neighbourhood of Orte, where the Nera joins with the Tiber. Here at some distance from the town they found a quiet place where the ancient Etruscans in the long past had buried their dead. The cave-like tombs, now empty, offered shelter: so here the brethren purposed to abide awhile and give themselves to prayer and meditation: for they felt the need of collecting and strengthening their souls' energies in uninterrupted communion with God at this new beginning of their vocation.

For fifteen days they abode in this place: every day some of them would go into the town and beg food. If after the common meal, anything were left over, they gave it to the poor who passed by or they placed it in one of the tombs to supply part of the next day's meal. But at the end of the fifteen days they determined to proceed on their way. A subtle temptation had come into their retreat: the solitude was becoming very sweet to them and they had begun to argue amongst themselves whether they could not better fulfil their vocation by abiding apart from the haunts of men and giving themselves wholly to a life of contemplation and prayer. None felt the attraction of solitude more than Francis himself; but as he pondered prayerfully upon it, he grew convinced that it held a betrayal of his proper vocation. The

[1] I Celano, 34; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 1.

poor knight of Christ must have no abiding place on earth, but wander through the world to win souls to God. So they broke up this encampment.[1] They passed along the course of the turbulent Nera through the dark well-wooded valley which leads into the open spaces of the valley of Spoleto, and so on to Assisi.

They did not now settle at the Porziuncola: it may be that they were too many in number for the tiny shelter Francis had built there; or it may be that Francis felt a scruple in claiming, as it were, a permanent abode anywhere after the temptation which came to him in the wilderness near Orte. Whatever the reason may have been, they lodged on their return, in a derelict shelter at Rivo-Torto,[2] a district which lies within a half-hour's walk from the city as you look across the plain to Cannara. It was not far from the leper settlement at Santa Maria Maddalena, and one could easily reach the chapel of the Porziuncola through the wood in as quick time as it takes to get into the city.[3]

[1] I Celano, 34-5.

[2] "*quoddam tugurium ab hominibus derelictum*," says 3 Soc. 55.

[3] There has been much controversy over the actual site of the shelter at Rivo-Torto. In the sixteenth century a church was built upon a supposed site. It is standing to-day and the custodians have no doubt at all about its claim.

M. Sabatier (*Spec. Perfect.* p. 95, n. 1) asserts that the shelter was close to the leper settlement of Santa Maria Maddalena, basing his assertion on the words of Bartholi, who describes the shelter as "*ultra Sanctam Mariam* (*i.e. de Portiuncula*) *per spatium parvis miliaris juxta hospitale leprosorum*". But Bartholi's measurements cannot be taken as accurate. However from the words of 3 Soc. 55: *Reliquerunt igitur dictum tugurium ad usum pauperum leprosorum*, it seems probable that the shelter was nearer to the leper settlement than the present church of Rivo-Torto. Here I would like to appeal for a more reverent care of the chapels of Santa Maria Maddalena and San Ruffino d' Arce, than they are given at present. No ground in the neighbourhood of Assisi is more sacred to the memory of Francis than these places, where he so frequently nursed the lepers. May we hope that the day will come when they will be placed in a more reverent custody?

The shelter, however, was never built to give housing to twelve men, and because the brethren in their solicitude for each other would be apt to remain outside in the open that others might have more comfort inside, Francis took a piece of chalk and marked on the wall a place for each one, where he might rest and pray when his day's work was over.

Here the brethren lodged it would seem far into the following winter or longer. Things went hard with them at times in the way of bodily comfort. Not only was there the cramped space but now and then there was also a lack of food, even of the poor fare they were now accustomed to. Some days they had to appease their hunger with mangels, the food of beasts.[1]

They do not appear to have undertaken any long missionary journeys at this time. It may be that Francis thought it more prudent to exercise his little band in the more intimate ways of the poverty they had vowed, in manual labour and services for the lepers, and in the habit of self-discipline and prayer.[2] Perhaps it was that the political turmoil and troubles which had come upon Umbria, made missionary work on a larger scale inexpedient for these neophytes. For the forces of the emperor Otho IV, who had been crowned by the Pope in the preceding year, and had broken his oath of fidelity to the Holy See, were now over-running the valley of Spoleto, laying waste the territories of Perugia and reducing all Umbria to the imperial power. At the beginning of the year, Otho had invested one of his captains, Dipold of Acerra, with the duchy of Spoleto, vacant since the exclusion of Conrad of Lutzen; and when, on 28 February, Perugia promised to defend the patrimony of the Holy See, Otho at once

[1] 3 Soc. 55.
[2] I Celano, 45.

let loose his army to ravage and bring into subjection the Umbrian cities: and all that year the country knew no peace. In the autumn Otho made an armed progress through the valley on his way to Rieti. It was probably on this occasion that Francis sent one of the brethren to meet the emperor as he was passing by and to announce to him that his power would be of short duration.[1] In this fashion did the brethren in these early days at Rivo-Torto chiefly fulfil their missionary duty, by announcing their message to the passers-by or to the people amongst whom they worked.

But Francis himself did more. On his return from Rome he began to preach not only in the open places of the city but in the churches. The first church in which he preached was the little church of San Giorgio,[2] where Bernard da Quintavalle had distributed his goods to the poor.

Shortly afterwards the canons of the Cathedral invited him to preach every Sunday in the Cathedral itself.[3] These sermons took place in the early morning when the Italian people love best to flock to the churches for Mass; and Francis, perhaps for greater recollection, went into Assisi on the Satur-

[1] *Ibid.*, 43; where, however, the chronicler seems to imply that this incident happened as Otho was on his way to Rome to receive the imperial crown ("*ad suscipiendam coronam*"). But Otho seems not to have gone by Assisi on his way to Rome, but by Viterbo (cf. F. Boehmer, *Regesta Imperii*, v. p. 96).

After his coronation, however, Otho passed by Assisi in December, 1209, and again on his way to Rieti in 1210. He was at Rieti in the November of that year; in which same month he was excommunicated by the Pope (cf. Boehmer, *ibid.* p. 103 and pp. 126-7; Gregorovius, *Hist. of the City of Rome*, [Engl. transl.], Vol. V, part 1. pp. 86-93. Not improbably Otho's shameless pillaging of the Papal territories brought upon him the prophetic warning of Francis.

[2] Chron. Jordani, No. 50 (*Anal. Franc.* 1. p. 16); *Leg. Maj.* IV. 4.

[3] *Leg. Maj.* IV. 4.

day evening and lodged the night in a house in the canons' garden adjoining the Cathedral. There he slept his brief sleep, and then arose to prepare for his discourse by long hours of prayer.[1]

It is difficult to describe the effect of Francis' appearance in the pulpit of the Cathedral. One must have seen an Italian congregation hanging upon the words of a popular preacher to realize the scene. They are an impressionable people easily provoked to tears or laughter, to applause or scorn. They are quick to detect insincerity and are apt to despise a laboured effort. He who would win them, must speak heart to heart, and they love to have the message put before them dramatically, with gesture and movement. The whole man, body and soul, must speak if they are to listen. And when they are moved they respond in the same entire human fashion. They utter their approval or dissent, sometimes in words, sometimes in gesture, sometimes in a tense attitude of the whole body. Francis himself was typically Italian in temperament and character. When he felt strongly, his whole body reflected his emotion. Unconsciously and without effort he would act his thoughts; his words vibrated with the emotion of his heart, and arms and feet and all his body moved in unison with his speech.[2] Then he had that special gift of the moving speaker, a musical voice, easily able to modulate its utterance to the character of the emotions.[3] He lacked a fine presence, he was too small and spare; and the coarse, ill-shapen habit he wore rather distracted the eye from the delicacy of his features.[4] But the bodily presence of the

[1] The room in which Francis lodged is still shown to the visitor to the Duomo of Assisi.

[2] Cf. I Celano, 73, 86: II Celano, 107.

[3] "*Vox vehemens, dulcis, clara atque sonora*" (I Celano 83).

[4] See the letter of Thomas of Spalatro. Cf. *infra*, p. 359.

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man was forgotten as soon as he began to speak, and the inner fire of his spirit shot out its lightning flashes, dazzling the inward eye with the clearness of the truth he revealed in the consciences of his hearers. He had no studied rhetoric, he spoke straight from the fullness of the heart, in pithy sentences brittle and swift. His language was homely, as it was spoken by the people themselves; he borrowed none of the phrases of the schools: oftentimes the homeliness of the speech was elevated only by the sincerity of the speaker, at other times by the dramatic vividness of the thought or a poetic sensibility to nature. Not infrequently when people sought afterwards to recall his words, the words themselves fell flat or insipid apart from the fire of the spirit with which they were uttered. Francis' power was in himself, not in his words. He brought them no new doctrine to arrest their thought; he was as a flame enkindling the smouldering faith of his hearers: for awhile he would lift them up into the clear ardours of heaven, where their souls stood revealed to themselves and their hearts were aglow with unwonted desire of the higher life. And at such times "he seemed to those who beheld him as a man from another world, whose heart was set on Heaven and his face turned towards it, and who was seeking to draw them upwards with him".[1] Unflinchingly he searched the consciences of his audience; but there was a sympathy in his voice which left no sting but only a confession of the truth: it was as though he were voicing the hearts of those before him, now that they suddenly stood in the presence of God.

An example of the substance of his preaching is found in the letters and written exhortations which he was accustomed to send to the people by the friars, at those times when sick-

[1] *Leg. Maj.* IV. Cf. II Celano, 107.

ness prevented him from going abroad. Thus one can imagine him standing before the crowd of citizens in the Cathedral of Assisi, his whole body working with emotion, his face tense in its earnestness, uttering some such words as these: "We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh but rather must we be simple, humble and pure. Our bodies we must hold in opprobrium and contempt since all of us by our own fault are wretched and corrupt, rotten and worms, as the Lord tells us by His prophet: I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people.[1] And we must never desire to be set above others, but to be servants and subject to every human creature for God's sake. And all who shall do in this manner and persevere therein, upon them the spirit of the Lord shall rest, and He will make in them His dwelling-place and they shall be children of our heavenly Father, whose works they do; and they shall be the spouses, brethren, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are His spouses when the faithful soul is united with Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost. We are His brethren when we do the will of His Father who is in Heaven. We are His mothers when we bear Him in our heart and our body by love and a pure and sincere conscience, and bring Him forth in holy deeds which must shine as an example to others. O how glorious and holy and great it is to have a Father in heaven! O how holy, fair and lovable it is to have a Spouse in heaven! O how holy and delightful, pleasing and humble, peaceful and sweet, amiable and above all things to be desired, is it to have such a Brother who laid down His life for His sheep and prayed to the Father for us, saying: 'Holy Father, keep in My name them whom Thou hast given Me'."

[1] Psalm xxi. 6 (Vulgate).

Or again he might be denouncing the folly of avarice and usury, that folly which was at the root of so much of the bitterness which set class against class and family against family in hatred and frequent feuds:

"Look to it ye blind, you who are deceived by your enemies, the flesh, the world, and the devil. Neither in this world nor in the next will you have any good thing. You think you will enjoy the vanities of this world, but you are deceived; for the day and the hour comes, of which you think not, which you know not and are ignorant of. The body sickens, death draws nigh. Relatives and friends come and tell you: 'Place your affairs in order'. And his wife and children, his relatives and friends make pretence to weep. Looking up he sees them weeping and is moved by an evil impulse, and considering cunningly within himself, he says to them: 'Behold I put my body and soul and all that I have, into your hands'. Truly accursed is this man who thus confidently places his body and soul and all that he has, into such hands. Wherefore the Lord says by the prophet: 'Accursed is the man who trusts in man'. Then at once they bring in the priest; and the priest says to him: 'Will you receive penance for all your sins?' He replies: 'I will'. 'Will you make satisfaction out of your goods as far as you can, for all the fraud and deception you have committed?' He replies: 'No'. Then asks the priest: 'Why not?' 'Because,' says he, 'I have already put all my goods into the hands of my relatives and friends.' And he begins to lose his speech, and thus the wretched man dies a bitter death."[1]

[1] Both these passages are taken from *Epistola I* (Opuscula, ed. Quaracchi, pp. 93-4; 96-7). According to Wadding this letter was written in 1212 or 1213; but others think it was written in the spring of 1215, when Francis was sick with fever. Undoubtedly, however, it sums up the teaching of the

This dramatic figuring of the deathbed of the usurer or dishonest merchant would send many a man home with a chastened spirit, and such sermons were followed not infrequently by entire conversions, and there came distributions to the poor of ill-gotten wealth, and not a few put aside altogether the unholy business of merchandise and took to less doubtful employments, such as cultivating the land.[1]

But in all his sermons Francis never failed to urge upon the citizens the blessings of peace and mutual love nor to denounce with pleading earnestness the spirit of hatred and envy which kept the commune in perpetual ferment, and the ambition for power which made the higher classes, whether nobles or burghers, bitterly hated by the lower class of citizen. It was the same in all the Italian communes: no sooner were they free from foreign domination, than the more wealthy began to usurp the government and tyrannize over the less wealthy, and faction was formed against faction and there was no common interest save when the German loomed up again to take away their independence: and oftentimes blood flowed freely in these internecine quarrels. Francis never tired of reiterating his cry of "Peace"! and when he preached the Christian glory of service and mutual subjection, the citizens knew that his mind's eye was upon the civic feud. Hard though it was to put off the ingrained habit of

apostolate. Francis, as we know, never hesitated to repeat himself. Thus passages of this very letter are repeated again in the Regula Prima, cap. XXII. Cf. Fr. Paschal Robinson. *The Writings of St. Francis*, pp. 96-7.

[1] We find this very frequently happening later on with the tertiaries or secular followers of Francis. It was doubtless a practice inculcated by Francis from the beginning on those who sought his advice. He never spared the avarice engendered by the industrial movement of his time. For this reason it was that he insisted on his disciples giving their wealth to the poor and not to their relatives, because he considered that the money begotten of fraud could only be purified when given in alms.

standing by one's own interest or ambition or by that of one's family or party, yet in the end his persistent pleading told and men began to utter the old party cries of hatred or arrogance with less assurance and even with shame.

Those Sunday sermons in the Cathedral, backed by the life of the brethren at Rivo-Torto, were working their way into the conscience of the city. Of that there is no doubt. Assisi was coming to acknowledge a prophet in its son and submit to his sweet guidance.

An event happened at the beginning of the winter of 1210-1211, to which historians have pointed as an evidence of Francis' influence. On 9 November, the citizens met in council and signed a treaty of concord amongst themselves. By this treaty the Majores or higher grade of citizens and the Minores or lower grade, bound themselves solemnly to work together for the honour and common good of Assisi, and each party promised to enter into no alliance with pope or emperor or king, nor with any city or town, nor with any person of power, without the consent of the whole commune. They were to respect each other's rights and henceforth to live in perpetual harmony. Exiles were to be allowed to return; the people who lived in the territories of the commune outside the city were to have equal rights with those who lived in the city itself, and all parties were to fulfil their respective obligations: taxes were fixed and were not to be assessed arbitrarily to any one's disadvantage. And so civic peace was to reign.[1]

It may be that the presence of the emperor's forces almost at their gates had something to do in bringing about this act of civic concord; at least so far as bringing to reason those whom Francis' words had not yet moved. Nevertheless they

[1] A. Cristofani, op. cit. pp. 79-82.

are doubtless right who connect this act of peace with Francis' preaching.

Meanwhile out at Rivo-Torto, Francis was fashioning his disciples to take their part in the apostolate which he had begun: nor did his work in the city distract him from this intimate solicitude for the men who had left all and followed him. As we have said, the brethren were at times in dire straits to supply even the barest necessities for their bodily support. But this in no way discouraged them. In their fervour of spirit they would oftentimes deny themselves in order to grow accustomed to do with as little sustenance as possible: for these men held that they were not really poor if they asked more of the charity of others than was really necessary; and to receive more than they actually needed they deemed an abuse of others' charity and a robbery of other poor. More than once Francis had need to rebuke their indiscretion. One night the whole company was awakened by the cries of a young brother who thought he was dying. Francis arose and saw that it was sheer want of food that the brother was suffering from, and without more ado he got together what scraps of food were at hand and himself prepared a meal. Then he sat down with the famished brother and, to spare his shame, himself took a share. When they had eaten, Francis spoke his mind to the brethren standing round: "My best beloved," he said, "I tell you that each one of you ought to pay heed to his nature; for some of you may be strong enough to be sustained on less food than others; yet it is my will that he who needs more food shall not be bound to imitate those who need less, but let each give to his body what it requires in order to be strong enough to serve the spirit. For whilst we must beware of that superfluity of food which is a hindrance both to body and soul; in

like manner, nay even more, must we beware of too great abstinence, seeing that the Lord wills to have mercy and not sacrifice."[1]

On another occasion Francis, noticing that a brother was not well, rose early in the morning and took him to a neighbouring vineyard, and choosing a spot near a good vine, sat down with the brother and together they ate of the grapes.[2] In after years the brethren would relate these incidents to a younger generation to show what manner of man Francis was.

And perhaps nothing in these first sensitive days made a greater impression on the mind of all the brotherhood, than Francis' constant care for them, so maternal in its quick divining sympathy. He was as their very soul. He perceived and felt their temptations and difficulties almost more clearly than themselves, and his word always brought comfort.

No trouble was too trivial for his watchfulness. He had known too well the difficulties of those early days when a man sets forth to walk the higher road in response to the imperious call of the spirit; he knew the elation and depression, the buoyant hope and the blank discouragement which make the first years of the spiritual life at once a delight and a torture. And as yet the brethren had not the vicarious security which an individual derives from an established order of things. The fraternity was only at the beginning of a corporate consciousness. The shelter of Rivo-Torto was not possessed of that spirit of place which was to come so swiftly to the Porziuncola. The one earthly mainstay of the brothers

[1] II Celano, 22; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 27; *Leg. Maj.* v. 7. See also Eccleston, *De adventu* FF. *Min.* [ed. Little], col. xv. p. 106, where it is related how St. Francis compelled Albert of Pisa to take twice the quantity of food he was accustomed to take.

[2] II Celano, 176; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 28.

was Francis himself. Hence they clung to him as a child clings to its mother, with a feeling of blind unreasoning confidence. He was their oracle and law, the pledge that God was with them: and in this belief they found the strength they often needed in these critical days when their spiritual feet were yet uncertain of the hard earth they trod. How deeply this conviction had taken hold of them is shown by this incident.

Francis had gone as usual one Saturday evening to the Cathedral to await his Sunday sermon. Now that night, whilst some of the brethren at Rivo-Torto were sleeping and others keeping vigil, suddenly they were all startled and there appeared to them a fiery chariot chasing to and fro in the shelter, and above the chariot was a ball of fire of surpassing brightness. At the same moment their souls were flooded with spiritual light and their consciences were revealed to each other. Seeking for an explanation of this marvel as they gathered together, the brothers concluded that in the fiery chariot and ball of fire, Francis' spirit had manifested its continual presence with them: and in this belief they were confirmed when, the next day, on his return, Francis was already aware of the mystery of the night.[1] Thus it was that whether in preaching to the people or in forming the brotherhood, his penetrating sympathy was as a spirit which moved over the waters, bringing light out of darkness and an abundant life out of the void.

[1] I Celano, 47; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 4.

THE CHAPEL OF PORZIUNCOLA

CHAPTER II.

THE PORZIUNCOLA.

In after years the place of the Porziuncola was to acquire a sort of sacramental significance in the story of Francis and his friars. It was the sanctuary wherein the sacred fire was deemed to be enshrined and kept alight and where the spirit of Francis was held to haunt the earth.

> Holy of Holies is this Place of Places,
> Meetly held worthy of surpassing honour!
> Happy thereof the surname, "of the Angels,"
> Happier yet the name, "The Blessed Mary".
> Now a true omen the third name conferreth,
> "The Little Portion," on the Little Brethren:
> Here where by night a presence oft of Angels,
> Singing sweet hymns illumineth the watches.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Here was the old world's broad highway made narrow,
> Here the way made broader for the chosen People;
> Here grew the Rule; here Poverty, our Lady,
> Smiting back pride, called back the Cross amongst us.[1]

So sang one in after times, uttering in verse the thoughts of many brethren. And to this day is the place of the Porziuncola held sacred in the Catholic Church next after the three holiest sanctuaries of the Holy Land, St. Peter's in Rome and St. James at Compostella.

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 84 [S. Evans' translation].

The old chroniclers tell how after Francis and the brethren had taken up their abode there, a certain devout man saw in a vision a great multitude of men gathered on bended knees around the little chapel, and they were all blind. With clasped hands and uplifted faces they were beseeching heaven in a loud and pitiable voice to give them light, when suddenly from the sky there broke forth a great radiance which fell upon them all and restored their sight.[1] And indeed the Porziuncola was to bring light to many people who had been sitting in darkness, as all who know the story of Francis are aware.

For three years past Francis had loved this chapel in the woods, and there he and his first disciples, as we have seen, had found their first meeting-place. It may seem strange that when he first bethought him of the need of a sort of nursery for this new brotherhood, he did not at once turn to the Porziuncola. Yet so it is often in life. The men and things that are destined to be most intimately bound up with our ultimate struggles and affections come to us in some sort as an afterthought or as a fate over-ruling our own decision. It may be that Francis in the beginning thought to have no permanent dwelling at all, and that only with the coming of new novices he grew convinced of the need of some dedicated spot where the spirit of the Lady Poverty might make for itself a shelter from the world for the training of the neophytes. Then finding the shelter at Rivo-Torto unoccupied, it would be like Francis to take this as an indication of God's Providence and to seek no further for a lodging place; he would hesitate to cast a longing desire upon any other spot however attractive, for in such desire he would see a sort of

[1] II Celano, 20; *Leg. Maj.* II. 8; 3 Soc. 56.

mental possession. His rule was to take what was freely given: he would never lay claim to anything.

But Rivo-Torto was nevertheless not destined for long to be the nursery of the Franciscan brotherhood. A trivial thing, the discourtesy of a peasant, was the occasion of the brethren leaving it. One day when they were at prayer, a peasant, driving an ass, came to the shelter. He was evidently annoyed to find it already occupied and in some sort of possession, and this aroused his anger and induced him to assert his right to enter in with ostentatious incivility. In a loud voice he urged his beast: "get you in; here we will make ourselves a cosy dwelling"; and so he went on addressing to the ass the taunts of usurped ownership and easy living, which were meant for the ears of the brethren. The discourtesy of the man's speech cut Francis to the quick; he felt it for his brethren's sake, for willingly though these men endured personal injury they were yet sensitive to the injury done to another.[1] Moreover, as he thought the matter over, he was troubled at the insinuated disloyalty to his Lady Poverty, and again, at the disturbance such intrusion must cause to the meditations of the brethren: and he ever had a feeling of delicacy about intruding between God and the soul in moments of prayer. So without further delay, he bade the brethren leave the shelter and seek with him a resting-place elsewhere. With something of his old wit, he remarked: "God has not called us to prepare a stable for an ass and to entertain every passer-by, but to preach the way of salvation and give ourselves to prayer".[2]

But the difficulty now was where to go? With his habitual deference to the Bishop of Assisi, Francis first went to

[1] Cf. 3 Soc. 42.

[2] 3 Soc. 55; 1 Celano, 44.

him and asked for the use of some chapel where the brethren might without disturbance make their prayer; but the bishop had no chapel to put at their disposal. Next he went to the canons of the Cathedral, but received the same reply. Finally he sought out the abbot of the monastery on Monte Subasio, who at once offered him the chapel of the Porziuncola. But the abbot made one condition: should the fraternity increase and grow into a great order, the Porziuncola chapel must always be regarded as the chief place of the order. Francis readily acquiesced; and to his chivalrous soul it seemed to him that this condition placed the fraternity in perpetual fealty to the Mother of God "the head, after her Son, of all the Saints".[1]

So the brethren went to the Porziuncola, and around the chapel they built narrow huts of branches of trees and earth,[2] such as a traveller might build for a temporary rest on a journey: for Francis was insistent that even here, where in God's Providence the fraternity would abide for all time, their abode should have no character of a permanent dwelling, so that the brethren might be ready at any moment to go forth should God call them. It was some years before a house was built at the Porziuncola, and then it was built by the citizens of Assisi against the will of Francis.[3] And lest the brethren should at any time come to regard the chapel as their own or claim a proprietorship in the land, Francis made a law that every year they should, by way of rent, take a basket

[1] II Celano, 18; 3 Soc. 56; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 55. That the Porziuncola was only given to Francis for the use of the brethren and not as a real possession, is proved by the bull of Innocent IV, dated 11 March, 1244, in which amongst other properties of the Abbey of Monte Subasio, is mentioned the chapel of the Porziuncola. Cf. P. Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect. Etude Speciale du chapitre* 55, p. 269.

[2] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* capp. 9, 10. [3] *Vide infra*, p. 267.

of fish caught in the river, to the abbot of Monte Subasio: and for many years this was done until the great abbey was destroyed. And in his courtesy the abbot would send back a flask of oil as a receipt.[1]

In the century after Francis' death, a delightful story was told as to how the brethren came by this gift of the Porziuncola. A devout rustic, it runs, standing one day near the chapel of our Lady heard the angels singing within, and full of wonderment he ran and told the priest who served the chapel, and ended by asking: Why do you not ask Brother Francis and the brothers who live at Rivo-Torto to go and dwell there? The priest acted on the suggestion and went and brought Francis to the spot. No sooner did Francis enter the chapel than he beheld in vision Christ and His Blessed Mother; and he boldly asked our Lord whence He had come. Our Lord answered: "I am come from beyond the sea".[2] "Wherefore?" asked Francis again; and again our Lord answered: "To espouse this place to Myself". Francis coming to himself exclaimed: "I will never leave this spot". And he went straightway and besought the abbot to give him this place.[3] The story is true at least to the spirit of the Porziuncola and to that singular affection and reverence in which Francis held it. For to him it was in very truth a place wedded to Christ and his glorious Mother;[4] and

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 55. The abbey was destroyed in 1399. But the custom of sending annually a basket of fish to the Benedictines, has recently been revived; the fish being now sent to the monks of San Pietro in Assisi, where the monks of Monte Subasio took refuge after the destruction of their abbey.

[2] Evidently a reference to the traditional origin of the chapel. *Vide supra*, p. 53.

[3] Bartholi, *Tractatus de Indulgentia S. M. de Portiuncula*, cap. 1.

[4] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 55: "*licet enim locus iste sit sanctus et praelectus a Christo et a Virgine gloriosa*".

within its walls the angels sang to him and heaven revealed its secrets.

Francis' delight in settling at this woodland chapel can be compared only to that of a bridegroom bringing his bride to the home of her choice. The very name was a joy to him; he thought it must have been given to this spot in anticipation of the coming of the Lady Poverty.[1] With a fond reverence he was solicitous to make this place a mirror of the perfection of the life to which the brethren were called. He set it about with a hedge within which no secular person might set foot, so that no word other than that concerning spiritual things might be uttered there. Within that enclosure even the brethren might not speak save of God and their soul's welfare.

No idleness was tolerated there; when the brethren were not at prayer they were at work: each must have some craft to which he could turn when not employed in spiritual exercises.[2] Day and night they kept up the service of prayer. At first, having no books from which to read the canonical office, they recited instead the *Pater Noster* at each of the liturgical hours.

The domestic ordering of the fraternity too was in accordance with the spirit of Poverty: it was based upon mutual service and brotherly love.[3] Where all were ready to

[1] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 55; II Celano, 18.

[2] Thus Francis carved wooden vessels, probably for the use of the brethren (cf. II Celano, 97); in later years he made wafers for sacramental use. At Greccio they still preserve the iron mould he had for this purpose. Brother Giles was an adept in making baskets (cf. *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 206). Brother Juniper carried about an awl for mending sandals (*ibid.* p. 245).

[3] Cf. *Regula Prima*, cap. V: *Per caritatem spiritus voluntarie serviant et obediant invicem. Et hec est vera et sancta obedientia Domini nostri Jesu Christi.*

put aside themselves and their own will and to make themselves servants to each other, and where all were animated by the same spirit and ideal, authority, as it is generally understood, was hardly needed. Francis' idea of authority was that of leadership in the harder paths of the vocation and of service and solicitude for the needs of those who depended upon him: and this was the idea he impressed upon the brethren. In the ordinary administration of the daily life of the brethren he would seldom exercise the authority given him by the Holy See; but he had chosen another who was held not so much as a superior but as a mother of the household, and whose duty it was to care for the temporal needs of the brethren, to shield them against the intrusions of the outer world which might be a distraction to their spirit of prayer, and to set to each his particular office in the common life. But Francis took care that each brother should have periods when he might give himself uninterruptedly to the cultivation of the spirit in seclusion and prayer whilst the active duties were performed by others.[1]

For their daily bread, of course, they went out to work or beg. They refused no work which was not unbecoming the unworldliness of their character nor in opposition to their conscience. They did work in the fields, helping the farm hands to gather in the harvests or cultivate the soil; they

[1] This method of government was long maintained in its primitive simplicity in the hermitages of the Order, after the establishment of a more formal government in the convents or larger community houses: as is evident from the Rule which Francis later on gave for those living in hermitages. Cf. *De religiosa habitatione in Eremo*, in *Opuscula* (Quaracchi), pp. 83-4.

When later on more formal superiors were established, Francis still endeavoured to keep alive this idea of service as the essential characteristic of the superior in the fraternity: he would have superiors styled "ministers," not priors. Cf. *Regula Prima*, cap. VI.

even worked as servants in the houses of the citizens: always, however, doing the menial labour and never accepting any post of authority.[1] When the day's work was finished they returned to the Porziuncola, bringing with them the food they had earned, which went towards the common meal. But when work was not to be had, or when their employers treated them scurvily and sent them home unrewarded, then they must needs go from door to door and beg.[2]

Such was the life with which Francis adorned the Porziuncola that his Lady Poverty might find there an abiding dwelling-place and set the law of her spirit to the fraternity in all the time to come. And it was here that the new postulants were to receive their first instruction in the life and duties of the brotherhood. There was no formal period of probation for novices at this time, as there came to be later on. When anyone sought admission to the fraternity he was brought to Francis and submitted to his scrutiny. If the postulant showed signs of a vocation he was given the habit and received to profession. But first he was obliged to give whatever property he possessed to the poor. It was not enough that he left it in the hands of his relatives. These knights of Poverty were set by God to establish a new order of things in the world in conformity with the wisdom of the Gospel of Christ. They were not to establish their families in wealth and thereby pander to their vanity, but they were to teach the world by example the beauty of universal love and pity. They who were in need had a first claim upon their property according to the charity of Christ: and to deny them this charity was in the eyes of Francis to cheat Christ Himself of His heritage. Only when their relatives

[1] Cf. *Regula Prima*, cap. VII.; I Celano, 39-40.
[2] Cf. *Testamentum S. Franc.*

themselves were in want, might the postulants leave them their goods. It happened on one occasion that a postulant came to seek admittance into the brotherhood and was bidden in the usual course to go first and distribute his goods to the poor. He went back and renounced his possessions, but in favour of his family. Then he returned and told Francis what he had done; but Francis laughed and bade him go back again to the family he had enriched: "You have given what is yours to your brethren according to the flesh and have defrauded the poor. You are not worthy to be reckoned amongst God's poor. Go your way."[1]

But amongst all the neighbourly services which Francis inculcated upon the brethren, the service of the lepers was the most insistent. In his courteous way he used to speak of them not as "the lepers" but as "my brother-Christians". And the brethren entered into his compassionate regard for them with enthusiasm. It was perhaps the portion of their service for others which they liked most, once they had overcome their dread of its loathsomeness. The lepers' helplessness and abandonment appealed strongly to their chivalry. Sometimes indeed their compassion outran their discretion. There was a brother, James the Simple they called him, who was given the care of a leper who was in the last stages of the terrible disease, and so loathsome to look upon, that he was not permitted to leave the hospital. The pitying brother fretted that his charge should be so utterly denied his freedom and the society of men, and one day brought him to the Porziuncola to see the brethren. Francis was away when the leper arrived, and finding him there on his return, he at once said to Brother James in the presence of the leper: "you must not lead these brother-Christians abroad in this

[1] II Celano, 81.

fashion; it is not decent, neither for you nor for them". But no sooner had he uttered the words than he was filled with pity and remorse because of the presence of the leper. Straightway he went and threw himself upon his knees before Peter Cathanii, who was then the "mother" of the community, and accused himself of his lack of thought for the leper's feelings, and ended by saying: "Confirm unto me the penance I wish to perform". Brother Peter replied: "Whatever it will please thee to do, that do". "This then is my penance," said Francis, "I will eat out of the same dish with my brother-Christian." And at the meal which followed, Francis and the leper sat side by side and ate out of the same dish.[1]

Perhaps the most difficult lesson the novice had to learn was that of begging his bread: and it seems that before receiving the novices to profession they were first tried in this exercise as well as in others. For there was one novice who, as the legend bluntly puts it, "did hardly pray at all and never did work, neither would he go forth for alms; but he did eat bravely". Francis dealt with him somewhat caustically: "Go your way, Brother Fly, since you are willing to eat the sweat of the other brethren but yourself are idle in the work of the Lord. Like a barren drone you gain nothing and do not work, but you devour the labour and gains of the good bees":[2] and so he dismissed him.

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* ed. Sabatier, cap. 58; ed. Lemmens, XXXII. In the former edition Peter Cathanii is described as Minister General; but in Lemmens' edition, it is simply said that Peter was present, without giving him any title. As Peter never was Minister General, it is evident that Sabatier's edition in this chapter is a later and less reliable version. The probability is that Peter was fulfilling the office of superior or "mother," since Francis went to him to confirm his penance.

[2] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 24; II Celano, 45.

Yet was Francis always compassionate for the beginners who were sent out to beg; for he himself knew the mortification of it. To encourage them he would himself go out first on the quest for alms. He deemed it no sign of a worldly spirit when a young brother felt shame in begging, but only when for shame they refused to beg.[1]

He himself had now come, from frequent meditation on the poverty of Jesus Christ, to hold it as a privilege to live by alms: and more especially by alms won on the quest from door to door. Such alms he considered more honourable to poverty than those offered spontaneously, because they were won by a greater exercise of humility.[2]

But for the younger brethren this begging from door to door was an undoubted trial of their vocation. One day a brother who had been sent out to beg—perhaps one of the shy ones who had need to summon his courage to his aid—came back carrying his wallet filled with food, over his shoulder, and as he came along he sang aloud. Francis hearing his voice at once went out to meet him, and taking the wallet, embraced the brother and kissed the shoulder over which the wallet had lain. "Blessed be my brother," he exclaimed, "who goes forth promptly, quests humbly, and comes back merrily."[3]

[1] II Celano, 71. [2] Ibid.

[3] II Celano, 76; cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 25. The evidence of all the early legends is too clear to admit any doubt upon the fact that the Friars Minor in the primitive days went begging when other means of subsistence failed them. Yet two contemporary witnesses outside the Order state that the first Franciscans did not beg. Burkhardt in his Chronicle (*Mon. Germ. Hist. Scriptores*, tom. XXIII. p. 376) says: "*Pauperes Minores . . . neque pecuniam nec quicquam aliud præter victum accipiebant et si quando vestem necessariam quispiam ipsis sponte conferebat, non enim quicquam petierent ab aliquo*". And Jacques de Vitry in his well-known letter (cf. P. Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect.* p. 300) says of the Poor Clares: "*Nihil accipiunt sed de labore manuum vivunt*". The

To encourage the brethren, Francis often discoursed to them of the poverty of our Lord. "My brothers most beloved," he said to them once, "the Son of God was more noble than any of us; yet for our sakes He made Himself poor in this world. For love of Him we have chosen this way of poverty, wherefore we ought not to be ashamed to go begging. To be ashamed of the pledge of our heavenly heritage does not become us who are heirs of the kingdom. I tell you that many noble and wise men will come and join our brotherhood, who will take it as an honour to go out and beg. You, therefore, who are the first-fruits of the brethren, should rejoice and be glad and not be unwilling to do what you must hand down to these saints to come." [1]

Eventually by his example and fervent exhortations, Francis so far overcame the repugnance of the brethren that the questors, each returning from his own quarter of the city on a day they had been sent out to beg, would lay out their alms in mock rivalry contending as to who had proved himself the best beggar.[2]

They were, however, on no account allowed to receive money, even if it were freely offered them. Upon this point Francis was absolutely decided. Only in rare cases when the sick were in sore need, and in no other way could be relieved, did he allow the brethren to accept money at all;[3] and even that exception he made reluctantly. For to his

explanation is probably that the friars only begged in cases of necessity and without making themselves a nuisance to others. This explanation would also give another reason for St. Francis' special delight in alms gained by questing, as they would then be a token of a greater poverty and destitution.

[1] II Celano, 74; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 18.

[2] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 18.

[3] This exception was retained in the *Regula Prima* of 1221, cap. VIII.; but is not mentioned in the Rule of 1223.

mind money was the symbol of that world from which Poverty had set the brethren free, the world of barter and gain, of avarice and usury and of the hatreds which rose therefrom. It was, moreover, as he saw it, a sort of charter of possession in the things of the earth ; it gave a man a lien upon and in some way bound him up with the material world. The man who has money, holds the earth in bondage ; his money thrusts him between God and God's creatures, and too often he prostitutes the earth which is God's to his own selfish pleasure: and that to Francis was an unholy thing. "The earth is the Lord's," expressed, in a very intimate phrase, the faith of Francis concerning the use man should make of the visible creation ; and whatever tended to blur that faith he abhorred with all the passionate sincerity of his nature. It was not that he had any theories against the right of private property : in fact he accepted that right so far as it concerned others who were not of his fraternity : that was their concern and the concern of the Church. But he grieved over the abuse of the right ; and in his dealings with men of the world who sought his counsel, he always insisted that their property was a trust put into their hands by the providence of God, not for their own benefit alone but for the benefit of all who were in need. But for himself and the brethren he held that God had set them free from this trust in order that they might more convincingly by word and example warn the world against the dangers and lust of wealth. The very existence of the brotherhood dependent upon the good-will of men for their bodily sustenance, would be a continual reproach to the avaricious, and an invitation to those who held this world's goods to fulfil their trust in relieving the needs of the poor.

Hence in sending the brethren out to beg he would say

to them: "Go forth; for in this last hour the Friars Minor have been placed in the world that the elect may fulfil those things for which the Great Judge will commend them, saying: 'what you did to these My lesser brethren you did unto Me'."[1] So long then as men of the world held their goods in the spirit of a trust and in charity towards their fellowmen, he found no fault with them: his protest was against the greed and avarice which he saw festering in the whole body politic of his day: and of that greed and avarice, money, in his eyes, was the token. In those times money was not the general means of barter for common daily needs, as it has become since. In the simpler arrangement of society a labourer's wages were more generally paid in food and the ordinary necessaries of life: money represented not so much his present need as his future store; in a large measure it was the expression of a superfluity. As such it was apt to breed artificial wants and materialize the whole man: a danger which indeed seems inherent in money at all times, but which in those simpler days was the more apparent. Francis had himself experienced the danger; he had known the fascination of comfort and luxurious living which grows upon a man to the dimming of his spiritual sight when the road to luxuries is opened by a ready purse. He knew too by observation of the world in which he had lived, the brutal arrogance and love of power which money is apt to breed in those who have it. And all these things made him regard money as a peculiarly unholy possession which not only clogged the soul in its more spiritual movements, but tended to dehumanize both heart and mind: hence the disdain and almost virulent reproach with which he came to regard it. Francis, as you must have seen already, was not of the race of

[1] II Celano, 71. Cf. Matt. xxv. 40.

philosophers who stand aloof and take the world as a mere mental problem. His philosophy was all bound up with his own vocation and duty; he was consecrated to free the world from the tyranny of the greed and avarice of wealth; and as money was the actual weapon with which this tyranny prosecuted its reign he held it as *de facto* the devil's snare. One must understand that in order to understand Francis and why he would not allow the brotherhood even to touch the unholy thing. Thus one day a visitor to the chapel of the Porziuncola, left behind him on the altar a coin. A brother finding it there, took and threw it into a chest near the window; not, it would seem from the legend, altogether in contempt but with an eye upon future use. Francis, hearing what he had done, was much angered, and the brother in alarm threw himself upon his knees before him "offering himself even to stripes". It was seldom that Francis uttered a harsh word, but now he "chided right bitterly". As a penance he bade the brother go and take up the money in his mouth, as beasts do, and carry it in this fashion outside the enclosure of the Porziuncola and cast it on a dung-heap.[1]

The brethren came to feel with him in this matter of money and to have the same unreasoning reason; as was shown in the case of a young brother who thought to mock at the solemn conviction of an elder. They were going one day to the leper hospital when they came across a piece of money lying in the road. The elder would have passed on unheeding, but the younger picked it up and said it would be of use in assisting some poor leper: but he said this not so much out of compassion for the leper as in derision of the other's scruple. But hardly had he touched the coin when

[1] I Celano, 56; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 15.

he remembered Francis' warnings and presently he was struck with a great fear and began to tremble violently. He tried to speak, but was tongue-tied with fear; and it seemed to him that the piece of money was nothing else than an evil genius. With a great effort he at length cast it from him and the spell was broken. Then in great contrition he knelt before his companion and begged pardon, and recovered his peace.[1]

But perhaps the most marvellous thing about the Porziuncola was the simplicity of spirit of the men who gathered there. In that holy place it was as though one had come into an atmosphere of absolute truthfulness where no guile or conceit could continue to live. The brethren constantly strove to know themselves as they were and to appear before men for what they were. There was with them no pious dissimulation such as is sometimes justified by religious people on the plea of edifying their neighbour. In fact, so far were they from seeking to edify by deceit that they had an almost exaggerated anxiety that people should know their weaknesses and faults, especially after men began to respect them as saints. Thus once when Francis was sick he was persuaded by the brothers to eat of some fowl they had procured for him. Afterwards, however, he feared that he had been too self-indulgent, and knowing that the citizens esteemed him a man of austere life, he was struck with remorse. Taking a brother he went into the city. At the city's gate he took his cord and put it around his neck and bade his companion lead him by the cord through the streets in the way that criminals are led, meanwhile crying aloud: "Behold a glutton who fattens on fine fowl whilst you think him to be fasting".[2]

[1] II Celano, 66. [2] I Celano, 52.

Any unwonted show of reverence towards the brethren filled them with alarm or repugnance. Thus one brother when sent to establish a house in Bologna, came hastily back to the Porziuncola because the people in that city treated him as a saint;[1] and another, when met at the gates of Rome, by a procession of worthy folk who came out to do him reverence, turned aside and joined some children in a game of see-saw, until the waiting worthies turned back in disgust.[2] Not uncommonly in preaching they would confess openly their own sins lest people should take them to be as holy as the doctrine they preached, or because in their simple sincerity they desired the prayers of the people for their own salvation. Amongst themselves if one happened even to think injuriously of another, he would afterwards confess his thought and beg the other's pardon.[3]

So utterly guileless were they, that they could not credit that others were not as truthful as themselves in word or action. They believed the best of all men and were not easily brought to think evil of any. Thus there was a secular priest to whom some of them were accustomed to go to confession. He was unhappily a man of ill-fame; but the brethren could not be got to believe him other than he appeared, nor would they leave off making their confessions to him.[4]

But this was perhaps partly out of their reverence for the priestly office. In every priest they saw only the priestly dignity in which was reflected the majesty of Christ, and with all reverence they would kiss the hand which had held the

[1] *Actus S. Franc.* cap. 4; *Fioretti*, cap. 4.

[2] *Fioretti, Vita di Frate Ginepro*, cap. 9.

[3] I Celano, 56; 3 Soc. 43. See also what Eccleston says of the truthfulness which characterized the English friars, in *De adventu*, ed. Little col. v. p. 30.

[4] I Celano, 46.

Body of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.[1] They were not given to sitting in judgment upon any man : they were too conscious of their own defects in the sight of the holiness of God easily to find fault with the personal conduct of others : they kept an open eye only for the good in men's actions, which they took gratefully as food for their own souls. But the word of a priest was to them almost as the law of God, such was their reverence for him. Thus once when a priest said to a brother: "Beware of hypocrisy, brother," the brother was much troubled, thinking that the priest had detected in him a hypocrite. Some other brothers endeavoured to console him, but he replied : "A priest cannot lie".[2]

Thus were the brethren trained in the wisdom of Poverty ; and the Porziuncola came to stand in the eyes of men as the home of a new peace. To some it seemed as though the radiance of Bethlehem and Nazareth had again broken through the clouds which encompassed the world and was flooding the plain below Assisi with a clear and joy-giving light.

[1] Cf. *Testamentum S. Franc. : Nolo in ipsis considerare peccatum,*" etc.

[2] I Celano, 46; cf. *Vita Fr. Ægidii* in Chron. XXIV. Gen.; *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 79.

CHAPTER III.

THE PORZIUNCOLA (CONTINUED).

THEY were heroic days, those first years at the Porziuncola; and the men who were formed there at that period were more or less of the heroic type; at least as a body. In those days the brethren had no doubt or hesitation as to the wisdom of their life. Francis' word was their law; and as yet the difficulties and problems of a world-development had not come to disturb the harmony of the fraternity. Their thoughts were borne upon the wings of their spiritual desire far above the earth. The world's prudence and its conventions were nothing to them, not that they defied the world on its own ground but simply because they moved in another sphere of thought where these things have no part. No man could claim a place in the ordinary economy of the world and yet act as they acted. It was an evidence of the inherent idealism of the Church that their life was approved at all. We shall see later on what difficulties arose when it became necessary to bring the fraternity into some sort of relationship with the established traditions and the wider policy of the Holy See. But these difficulties had not yet arisen and the brethren of the Porziuncola were still living in undisturbed liberty of soul. The world looked on and wondered. At one moment it might revile the brotherhood as an outrage upon the conventions and their wisdom; the next moment it was

on its knees begging pardon, being won by some subtle grace it could not long withstand.

What, for example, could the world make of a man like Brother Juniper? Yet it respected and loved him in spite of itself. This Brother Juniper was one of the types bred at the Porziuncola, if one may speak of types in a community where every member retained a remarkable freshness and individuality of character. But he was typical of a certain childlike *naïveté* which came in a greater or lesser degree to all the brethren in their new vocation. In some it was combined with a shrewd knowledge of the world or with a native dignity of bearing or with a high natural intelligence: but all in some measure were endowed with it. They all had something of the open-eyed wonder and the intentness on the present moment which is characteristic of early youth.

Brother Juniper himself was naturally of a naïve disposition and a man in whom warm feeling was more potent than calm reason. He was impulsive and given to acting upon the idea of the moment; but he was utterly without a thought of self. He would have died smiling and unconscious of personal merit, for the sake of saving another man pain or to bear witness to the faith which was in him: and for this reason Francis esteemed him a very flower of the fraternity. "Would that I had a forest of such junipers!" he once exclaimed when Juniper had perpetrated some *gaucherie*. His very indiscretions were redeemed by his absolute sincerity and selflessness; so that the old chronicler dwells delightedly upon his story as one who would say: "See what a simpleton he is and yet we love and worship him". Who in fact could fail to love a man who, being somewhat intemperately reproved by his superior, is wholly unconcerned about his own humiliation but much concerned because the superior, in re-

proving him, had developed a sore throat? That happened in Juniper's case after the death of Francis, and the superior was one who did not appreciate simplicity as Francis did. On the evening of his reproof Juniper went into the city and obtained the materials for a good pottage of flour and butter. When the night was well advanced there was a knock at the superior's door, and, on the door being opened, there stood Juniper with a candle in one hand and the steaming pottage in the other. "My father," he said, "when thou didst reprove me for my fault, I saw that thy voice grew hoarse and I ween it was through overmuch fatigue. Therefore I thought of a remedy and made this mess of pottage for thee." The superior was only the more angered at being disturbed and bade him begone. Juniper, however, was full of pity and still stood there endeavouring to persuade the superior to eat the pottage; but without avail. At length, seeing that the superior would not eat, Juniper said: "Then if you will not eat, my father, I pray thee do this for me: hold the candle and I myself will eat it". The chronicler adds that the superior "being won by Brother Juniper's piety and simplicity, was no more wroth, but sat down and ate with him". Much the same thing happened frequently as between the brothers of the Porziuncola and the outer world: men might criticize this or that action, but the spirit in which it was done, made them captive. It was this Brother Juniper who played see-saw with the children outside the walls of Rome whilst the procession of people waited impatiently to do him honour. Another lesson, learned at the Porziuncola, Juniper carried out to the letter, namely, that of never refusing an alms to the poor, if there was aught to give. In after years when the brethren had convents built for them, Juniper could never be taught that the books and the furniture of the convent

must not be given away. He so frequently gave away his own clothing that the superiors at length strictly forbade him to part with his tunic, however poor a beggar might be. One day after this, meeting a beggar on the road and having nothing to give, Juniper said to him: "My superior has forbidden me to give away my tunic, but if you take it from me, I will not say thee nay"; and the beggar straightway stripped him of his tunic.

In which matter of intemperate giving, as some would call it, Juniper had a compeer in Francis himself. For once at the Porziuncola, when a poor woman came there begging, and there was nothing else to give her of any value, Francis gave the only book of the Gospels the brothers had.

Yet another incident in Juniper's story must we relate, as witnessing to the Porziuncola spirit. In his later days he had as a companion a brother of kindred disposition to his own, a Brother Amazialbene, whom he loved very dearly because of his admirable patience and obedience. Now, says the chronicler, Brother Amazialbene died, and Juniper, hearing of his death, felt such sorrow as he had never felt in all his life before. In his great bitterness of sorrow, he cried out: "Woe is me! wretched man that I am, for now is no good thing left to me, and the world is undone through the death of my sweet and dearest brother Amazialbene!" Pondering upon his loss, he said: "If it were not that I should not be able to have peace with the brothers, I would go to his grave and take up his head, and out of his head I would make two porringers; one of which I would always eat out of, in memory of him and for my devotion's sake; and out of the other I would drink whenever I was thirsty and wished to drink".

Such was Juniper, one of Francis' paladins; but whom

the Lady Clare, who held him in high reverence, aptly styled: "The plaything of God".[1]

Another typical knight of this company of Poverty was Brother Masseo, whom Francis held as a true Friar Minor because of his "gracious aspect and natural good sense and his fair and devout eloquence"; a different character, as you see at once, from the artless Juniper. Francis would often take Masseo with him on his journeys because when Francis himself was inclined to keep silence and to pray, Masseo would hold the people apart and preach to them; and since he was of handsome appearance and ready speech, people listened to him willingly. He was a singular combination of practical common sense and docile humility.

On one occasion master and disciple were on a journey and they came to cross-roads, one leading to Florence, another to Arezzo and a third to Siena. Masseo, who was walking ahead because Francis wished to be alone to pray, on coming to the cross-roads stopped and called back: "Father, by which way are we to go?" "By that which God shall will," came the reply. "But how can we know the will of God?" asked Masseo. Francis answered: "By the sign I will show thee. Wherefore by the merit of holy obedience, I command thee that in the cross-road where thou art now standing, thou turn round and round as children do and cease not turning till I tell thee." Masseo did as he was told, whilst Francis prayed to be led as God willed. Suddenly Francis cried out: "Stand still and tell me towards what quarter thy face is now turned". Masseo replied: "Towards Siena". "That is the way," replied Francis,

[1] Concerning Bro. Juniper, *vide Vita Fr. Juniperi*, in Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Anal. Franc.* III. pp. 54-65; *Fioretti, Vita di Frate Ginepro; De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. pp. 245-48 *et passim.*

"God would have us go." So they resumed their journey, Masseo going ahead as before, but wondering in his own mind why Francis had made him play the child before the folk who were passing by. They came to Siena and were lodged in the bishop's house. There was a feud raging in the city at the time, and no sooner had Francis heard of it than he went out into the city and preached to the people, beseeching them for the love of God, to have peace amongst themselves; and at his pleading the citizens put aside their quarrel and made peace with each other. On their return to the bishop's house the friars were received with great honour.

But Francis' humility took fright at so much respect, and early the next morning he woke up Masseo and, without a word to anyone, stole out of the house and went his way. As they went along Masseo was much troubled at what seemed to him a lack of discretion and courtesy on Francis' part, and his mind rebelled against the way Francis had treated him on the previous day at the cross-roads also against this discourtesy to the bishop; till suddenly he began to recall the wonder Francis had worked by his preaching in the city: and at that he was filled with remorse, and said to himself: "If an angel of heaven had wrought such wonders as did Brother Francis yesterday, it had not been more marvellous; wherefore if he had bidden me throw stones I should have done it and obeyed, for the good ending of that journey shows that what he does proceeds from the working of God".

However in spite of the occasional murmurings of his "natural good sense," Masseo was profoundly simple and humble. He might not always be able to square Francis' proceedings with common prudence, yet he felt that Francis was nearer to God than most men and therefore he gave him

a childlike obedience. That was the way at the Porziuncola. The brethren were convinced that God was working His Will amongst them on new and mysterious lines and that Francis was raised up to lead them in these ways : and that was why his word was their law.

Brother Masseo it was who once edified the brotherhood by a notable example of humility ; for being a man of good natural parts, humility perhaps shone all the more brightly in him. One day Francis said to Masseo before all the brethren : " Brother Masseo, all these thy companions have the grace of contemplation and prayer ; but thou hast the grace of preaching the word of God for the satisfying of the people ; wherefore that they may be able to give themselves to contemplation, I will that thou perform the offices of the door and of almsgiving and of the kitchen ; and when the other brothers eat, thou shalt eat outside the gate, so that when people come thou mayest satisfy them with good words of God ".

For some days Masseo performed these offices, making himself the servant of the household. But the other brothers, feeling the humiliation to which he was put, besought Francis to allow them all to share the labour of the place. Francis thereupon called Masseo and told him that in consideration for the request of the other brothers, he relieved him of his duties. But Masseo answered : " Father, whatever thou dost lay on me, whether wholly or in part, I deem it altogether God's deed ". At this Francis was glad and he preached to all the brothers a sermon on humility which greatly moved their hearts.

One of the recorded sayings of Brother Masseo is this. Seeing that some of the brothers were bent on making pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints, Masseo remarked that

he thought it better and more useful to visit living saints than dead ones. For, said he, in the living saints one learns the dangers and temptations they have to beware of and fight against.

On another occasion he composed a chant which he constantly sang. The brothers hearing the chant so frequently, asked him why he did not vary his song. He replied: "Because when a man has found a good thing, he ought not to change it".[1]

Very different in character from the ever-ready Masseo was Brother Ruffino of the family of the Scefi of Assisi: a timid and shy man, silent and reserved and at times apt to be morose: hardly a man, one would have thought, to enter the joyous company of the Porziuncola. Yet beneath his reserve there was a great gentleness and an entire sincerity. His timidity was the result of a highly-strung nervous temperament. And perhaps, because in the complexity of his own character Francis knew something of the self-torture and moodiness which come from sensitive nerves, he was usually very gentle with Ruffino. But in the case of Francis there was always a quick rebound from his depressions, a rebound which Ruffino lacked. Nevertheless there was a certain passive strength in this timorous, diffident brother and a sincerity of purpose which was in his case the basis of high spiritual attainment. Francis was wont to style him in his absence, Saint Ruffino. One thing Ruffino dreaded, and that was being sent to preach. If whilst on a journey he was told to address the people, he at once became incapable of uttering a word. One day Francis, wishing to cure him of his

[1] Concerning Bro. Masseo, cf. *Fioretti*, capp. XI. XII. etc.; Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Vita Fr. Massaei*, *Anal. Franc.* III. pp. 115-21; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 85; *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. pp. 193-7 *et passim*

diffidence, commanded him to go to a church in the city and preach as the Lord should inspire him. Ruffino begged to be spared the ordeal, alleging his incapacity, not without a certain obstinacy of opinion. Whereat Francis sternly reproved his hesitation, and as a penance commanded that he should now go to the church, stripped of his habit and clad only in his breeches. One can imagine what the command meant to Ruffino, but he went as he was told.

The citizens, seeing him go through the streets, thought he must be mad, and the boys made sport of him: but Ruffino heroically went through with his task and in his nakedness came to the church and preached to the people there. No sooner, however, had Ruffino set out than Francis grew remorseful at his own harshness, and in his southern fashion thus chided himself: "Son of Pietro Bernardone, thou vile mannikin, wherefore didst thou command Brother Ruffino, one of the noblest citizens of Assisi, thus to go preaching, naked? Please God, thou shalt have experience of what thou hast made another to endure"; and forthwith he stripped off his habit and set out for the city, clad only in his breeches. But one of the brothers, Leo by name, followed, taking with him both the habits of the two naked preachers.

As Francis entered the church Ruffino was addressing the people, speaking nervously and with difficulty. He was telling them to put away deceit and fraud and to give every man his due. Francis waited until the other had finished and then himself mounted the pulpit, and preached so convincingly on the poverty and nakedness of Christ that the listeners all wept. And as the two brethren left the church, now clothed in their habits, the people crowded around to touch the hem of their garments.

Ruffino, however, was not always so docile. On one oc-

casion he came to the conclusion that the life of service amongst strangers and of preaching was not for him and that he would serve God more faithfully if he gave himself to prayer in solitude, following the inspiration of his own soul and not the leadership of Francis; nor would he listen to what Francis had to say on the matter. He met all persuasion by saying that an angel of God had shown him the right path. So Francis went aside and began to pray.

At first Ruffino was relieved and elated when Francis turned aside, for it seemed to him as though a bright and glorious angel stood at his side; and this he took as an encouragement to go his own way. But suddenly the angel became an angel of darkness and Ruffino was overwhelmed with confusion and dread, and running to Francis he fell at his feet in a swoon. Francis lifted him up and comforted him, saying half playfully, half sadly, "O Brother Ruffino, thou poor simpleton, tell me now in whom thou didst put thy faith!" And Ruffino drew nearer to Francis in spirit and promised to obey.

So Ruffino trod the high-road of Poverty more often in fear and hesitation than in gladness. But at the end he found his peace. He lived for many years after Francis had left the earth; but when he was dying, his spiritual guide appeared to him in vision and gave him "a most sweet kiss"; and in the comfort of that embrace Ruffino met death joyfully.[1] Surely in this brother of the difficult temperament, did the spirit of the Porziuncola reveal itself in a mother-love,

[1] Cf. *Fioretti*, XXIX. XXX.; Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Vita Fr. Rufini*, *Anal. Franc.* III. pp. 46-54; *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. 197-202 *et passim*. Ruffino was one of the companions called upon by the Minister General, Crescentius, in 1244, to record in writing their recollections of St. Francis. Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1210) puts the reception into the Order of Juniper, Masseo and Ruffino in 1210.

pitiful and patient—that mother-love which alone can save such souls as that of Ruffino from its latent despair, and transform its burden into heroic endurance and ultimate peace.

Of a happier and bolder cast of mind was Brother Giles, with whom we are already acquainted, he who followed Bernard da Quintavalle and Peter Cathanii in joining the company. In some ways he had the most original character of all the disciples: he certainly stands foremost in the group of all those who embraced the life of Poverty in the earliest years. So confidently did Francis regard him that he would have made him a law unto himself in his comings and goings and the choice of his dwelling-places, only that Giles would not have it so. Unlike Masseo who preferred living saints to the dead, Giles, for the first six years of his religious life, was given to making pilgrimages, now to this shrine, now to that. Thus he visited in turn St. James at Compostella, St. Michael of Monte Gargano, St. Nicholas of Bari and the Holy Land, besides his several visits to the tombs of the Apostles in Rome; and wherever he went he carried with him the message of Poverty. He would always, even on his journeys, earn his bread by the labour of his hands. On his visit to the Holy Land, coming to the port of Brindisi, he had to tarry there some days, awaiting the sailing of a boat. Giles begged a pitcher and went about the town hawking water. At other times he made baskets of rushes and sold them for bread; or he would carry the dead to burial, or assist labourers in the fields. Once when he was staying in Rome, he went out every morning after hearing Mass and gathered faggots in a wood, and returning to the city went round selling his bundles. But one day when he was returning with his load of wood, a woman wished to buy it of him, and a price being fixed

upon, Giles carried the load to her house. The woman seeing that he was a religious, gave him more than she had promised, whereat Giles said to her: "Good woman, I would not that the vice of greed should overtake me: therefore I will take no more than we agreed upon". In fact he went away, leaving half the price behind him with the woman. "And at this," adds the chronicler, "the woman was filled with exceeding great reverence for him."

But Giles had a certain sturdy shrewdness and independence even in his devotion. One day in the market place of Rome a man was calling for a labourer to beat his walnut trees. Giles offered himself: and that evening he might have been seen making his way back to the house of the brethren, carrying on his back a load of walnuts tied up in his habit, which he had stripped off for the purpose. It was his wages for the day. In the harvest time he would go into the harvest field with other poor people to glean the ears which were left by the reapers: but on these occasions he usually gave his gleanings to the other poor: for he would not lay up any store beyond the day's need. Even when invited to stay in the houses of cardinals or dignitaries, when these great men began to court the company of the brethren, Giles insisted on going out each day to earn his bread.

But one day, when he was staying with the Cardinal-Bishop of Tusculum in Rome and it was raining heavily, the cardinal rallied him: "To-day at least you must eat of my table". But he did not know the ingenuity of his guest. Giles sought out the kitchen, and finding it unclean, he bargained to clean it up for two loaves. But he always took care amidst his incessant labour, to find time for prayer.

In the sixth year from his coming to the Porziuncola, Giles retired to a hermitage near Perugia, and from this time

he seems to have spent his days in one or other of the hermitages associated with his name in the neighbourhood of that city, Fabrione, Monte Ripido and Cetona. But he remained true to his principle of earning his bread by the work of his hands. Often was his solitude broken into by men who came from far and near to gather wisdom from his lips: for the fame of his wise sayings had gone abroad: and those who heard them would often commit them to writing for a better remembrance; and in after years these writings were gathered together under the title: "The Golden Sayings of Brother Giles," and in the book in which they are gathered they may be read.[1]

Such were some of the men who formed the brotherhood in those first days at the Porziuncola. Others there were equally worthy of notice, of whom some are already known to us in this history, like "the venerable Brother Bernard"; and others there are who will take their places as our story proceeds. Notable amongst these is Brother Leo, the "pecorello di Dio," as Francis called him, because of his singular purity and simplicity; a childlike soul, albeit a good scribe and useful secretary. Of others again but a passing memory has been recorded, though they were men for whose presence on this earth the world should be grateful. One such was Brother Simon. He spoke so sweetly of the love of God, that one who spent a whole night with him conversing on this subject, was surprised by the dawn; for the night had passed as though it had been but a few minutes. And Brother Simon was, moreover, very compassionate towards those who were tempted.[2]

[1] *Vide supra* p. 66, note 2.

[2] Cf. *Fioretti*, xl. Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1210) puts the reception into the Order of Leo and Simon in 1210.

Thus did the Porziuncola gather to itself men of diverse character and temperament, and what is more marvellous, whilst impressing upon all a generic family likeness, it left each man himself, fostering in each his own peculiar strength and nobility of spirit, as one cultivates in a fair garden many varieties of flowers. There was no moulding in a rigid groove: but the spirit of the place seemed to delight in the freshness each individual character brought to the riches of the whole and to treasure it as part of the secret of its joy. Francis indeed had no wish that all the brethren should be one external pattern. The true Friar Minor, he would say, scanning the perfections of the brotherhood, is Brother Bernard with his enduring faith and love of poverty; Brother Leo with his simplicity and purity; Brother Angelo with his fine courtesy; Brother Masseo with his gracious countenance and natural good sense and eloquence; Brother Giles with his gift for contemplation; Brother Ruffino with his habit of continuous prayer; Brother Juniper with his selflessness; Brother John with his great strength of body and mind; Brother Roger with his surpassing charity for the souls of others; Brother Lucido who in imitation of our Lord, will have no abiding place on the earth.[1] And this largeness of spirit was in truth one of the secrets which gave power and beauty to that Umbrian revival of faith.

[1] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 85. This chapter is evidently a compilation of the traditional sayings of St. Francis.

CHAPTER IV.

SAINT CLARE.

It was in the early spring of 1212 that the Lady Clare left her father's house and came to the Porziuncola and there vowed herself to Christ and Poverty in the presence of Francis and the brethren.

Some writers of late years have woven around this incident an air of uncertain romance as of an affection purified of grosser earthliness yet nevertheless earthly in its fibre. But they who have so written do not know either Francis or Clare. The point where their several affections met and linked their lives together, was beyond themselves, no other than the Lord Christ Himself. Him they both loved with a love which admitted of no other love less sacred and spiritual.

And they both loved the Christ in His earthly poverty and in His pity for the world; and in this revelation of the Christ-life they both found the full response to their own desire. And in this they became as children of one birth; such an entire sympathy did it create between them, and so intuitive an understanding did it give them of each other.

Even before she knew Francis, Clare had been strangely drawn to the poor as to her own people: and when she and Francis met it was as two kindred souls recognizing each other. Their first meeting probably was during the Lent of

1212. Francis had then returned from a series of apostolic missions in Tuscany and the country around Perugia and was again preaching in Assisi. The Assisians were now proud of their prophet and wherever he preached the crowds gathered to listen. Clare was amongst them. Perhaps she had heard him before; at any rate she would have heard of him.

At this time she was in her eighteenth year.[1] Her family was one of the noblest in the territories of Assisi, and besides their castle in the country they had a house in the city, but a few steps from the church of San Giorgio and from the Cathedral. Clare's father was of opinion that she ought to have been married before this; but whenever he spoke of marriage she refused to listen or parried his questions. She had as yet no definite idea of the future which lay before her, but there was that in her soul which bade her keep her freedom: already she was thinking of the life wholly dedicated to Jesus Christ in virginal chastity. Even in her early girlhood her world had stretched beyond the earth into the realm of religious mysteries; the call of the spirit had drawn her insistently apart amidst the ordinary pleasures and interests of her young life. Regularly she would withdraw herself from the distracting claims which the family life made upon her, and retire to some secluded nook and recite the *Paters* which linked her so sweetly with God, her heavenly Father, and all the household of the saints. And as she grew in years she

[1] According to Mariano of Florence, Clare was born on 16 July, 1194. Tradition says that Clare's father belonged to the noble Assisian family of the Scefi or Scifi and was lord of Sasso Rosso, a castle on the slope of Monte Subasio (Cf. V. Locatelli, *Vita di S. Chiara*, p. 334). But the traditional association of her family with Sasso Rosso is open to question. Ortolana, Clare's mother, is, however, mentioned by name in the legend, where it is also said that she was of noble and knightly family. Cf. Legenda S. Clarae, ed. Franc. Pennacchi, p. xxix *seq.*

became more and more as one living expectantly in the present. She took her part in the common round of daily life; learned to fulfil the duties which were proper to the daughter of a noble house, and submitted to her tire-woman's services; yet not without an insurgent protest of heart as the time came when these things began to speak of the family's claim that she should strengthen the family's position by a becoming marriage. She had no intention of marrying for the family's sake: and when the Lady Clare made up her mind, her heart was with her mind; and her heart was strong.

Her education was that of her time and class: that is to say, she had an elementary knowledge of reading and writing was proficient in the art of fine needlework and knew how to order the domestic affairs of a feudal household. Probably she was conversant in some measure with the romances of chivalry—the literature of the period—from listening to the minstrels who visited her father's house; and she would gain a large knowledge of the questions of the day from frequent intercourse with people keenly alive to the various topics of that stimulating age when politics and religious questions were brought from all quarters of the world and gained an actual value in the intense life of the commune. And so without being skilled in letters, as they would say in those days, Clare comes into this history as a woman of cultured mind. "She loved to listen to a well-prepared and learned discourse," says he who wrote her legend, "for she held that the kernel of doctrine, if encased in a shell of well-chosen words, is more easily discerned and more heartily relished."[1]

[1] Leg. S. Claræ, ed. Pennacchi, 37. The legend is published by the Bollandists, *Acta SS.* die 12 Augusti, tom. II. p. 742 *seq* A critical edition was published in 1910 by Prof. Franc. Pennacchi from the Assisi MSS. Cf. also

But this discrimination in favour of discourses "well prepared and learned" was not so much a distinctively intellectual trait, as part of the general sensibility of her nature. She instinctively looked for the greater things of life—the things which really mattered: it was part of the deep sincerity of her soul and her large spiritual vitality. She could never be satisfied with weak compromises in a matter of duty, but neither would she fuss over details of conduct which were not of the essence of some vital principle. But with this direct vision for the things of real and enduring value, was combined a temperament emotionally eager for beauty, perhaps more for moral beauty than for physical.

She loved flowers but it was because she found in them a figurement of the perfect soul. In her garden she nurtured the lily because it spoke to her of purity, and the rose because it spoke of love, and the violet because it is the flower of humility.[1] Music had the power to cast her into a sheer ecstasy of spiritual delight.[2] But her emotional sensibility never escaped the control of a mind which was eminently practical or of a will which was stayed about with loyalties to whatever won her reverence. Her loyalties were the mould into which a great strength of character flowed and took shape. Even the male folk of her family, hard-beaten soldiers bred of a line which had maintained itself and its possessions by the sword and brooked not readily any opposition to its claims,—even these stood in some awe of this strong-willed daughter of their house.

Fr. Paschal Robinson, *Life of St. Clare*, and Mrs. Balfour, *The Life and Legend of the Lady Saint Clare*, with Introduction by the present writer.

[1] An old tradition says that Clare grew these three flowers in her tiny garden at San Damiano because they symbolized her three favourite virtues.

[2] Cf. Leg. S. Claræ, 29; *Actus S. Franc.* cap. 42; *Fioretti*, cap. 35.

Perhaps it was partly because some sort of preternatural destiny seemed to hover around her: for shortly before her birth her mother was one day praying for a safe delivery, when she heard a voice saying to her: "Fear not, woman; for you shall bring forth a light whose rays shall enlighten the earth": and because of this mysterious voice, when the child was born, she was baptized by the name of Clare, that is "the shining one".[1] With such a mark of predestination upon her Clare was assured of a certain liberty as one touched by heaven and not altogether under the despotic paternal sway. And so as she grew up and showed an inclination to exercises of religion and the service of the poor, beyond the ordinary, she was let go her way. Very early the capacity for self-sacrifice which is inherent in strongly loving natures, showed itself in her. She would not give to the poor merely of her superfluous treasures or comforts; but she would deny herself of her needful food to feed them.[2] And because of her marvellous sympathy and gentle understanding ways with them, the poor loved her and all the city was speaking of her true charity.

So it was that Francis heard of Clare and how her heart went out to the poor and how wherever she went she seemed to bring the light of heaven with her; and he instinctively felt for her a great reverence, as when one comes into the presence of the utterly pure. And there grew up in him a great desire to see and speak with this maiden in whom the purity and gentleness of God was so manifest, that he might win her wholly to the service of Jesus Christ: "for he was wishful," says the old chronicler, "to snatch this noble prey out of the reach of a wicked world and to lay her, an illustrious trophy, upon the altar of God".

[1] Leg. S. Claræ, 2. [2] *Ibid.*, 3.

Clare on her part, having heard Francis preach, was convinced that she had found the one guide to whose counsel she could wholly trust herself, and was praying in her heart that some opportunity would be given her of opening out her thoughts to him: for his sermons had given direction to the life-long desire, and she was thinking wistfully of a life of poverty and the love of God such as Francis and the brethren of the Porziuncola were dedicated to. But it seemed difficult to find the opportunity without arousing the suspicion of her kinsfolk, and that she must avoid if it were possible. She was too well aware that, however wide a liberty might be given her whilst she kept within the conventions of her rank, and was yet to be accounted an asset in the family alliances, any such desire as she now harboured would be regarded as treacherous to the family interest and honour. It was one thing to act the lady-bountiful and go amongst the poor distributing alms: that was the recognized privilege of the daughter of a noble house. Even to enter an established convent might present no insuperable difficulty; there were convents which were, in some sort, appanages of noble families, and in a dignified fashion secured the patronage of heaven for the families whose daughters were consecrated within their walls. But to break through all the recognized conventions and pass into the ranks of the poor and work for her bread or depend on alms in the casual way of the street beggar, as did the brethren at the Porziuncola—Clare had no illusion as to the attitude of her people to any such proposal. And yet it was that for which her heart was now becoming eager.

It was Francis who made the opportunity for their meeting.[1] He had already accepted, as from the hand of God, the

[1] Leg. S. Claræ, 5.

charge of this rare soul. The charge had come to him not from his own seeking but in one of those imperious illuminations of the spirit, to ignore which is to betray God. And at that moment the utter reverence which filled his soul banished all fear. Ever since his turning to the spiritual life, he had kept vigilant guard over even the most innocent attraction to the society of women. He had not allowed himself any friendship with them, however worthy they might be; and even when as a messenger of the Gospel he had been compelled to give them advice concerning their soul's good, his words were few. Something in his own nature had bidden him take this watchful course; but partly also it was dictated by his own special conception of the honour in which women should be held. "Every woman," he would say to his brethren, "is a spouse of Christ: with what fear and reverence therefore should we regard them." [1]

The purity of woman was to him a dower of humanity emanating from the purity of the Redeemer of men; setting the mark of Christ upon human affections and human intercourse. He would not dishonour their purity nor sully his own by even a careless glance in which might possibly lurk a traitorous desire. For this reason he would not look them in the face; and always spoke to them with eyes downcast.

Only in the company of two women, the Lady Clare and the Lady Giacoma di Settesoli, did Francis relax this rule.[2] The one became a ministering Martha to the brethren, as we shall see in the progress of this history: but

[1] Cf. II Celano, 113-14.

[2] Cf. II Celano, 112. Celano does not explicitly state that the two women to whom Francis referred were St. Clare and the Lady Giacoma; but there can be little doubt as to their identity. They were the only two women with whom he had an established friendship.

it was the Lady Clare who ministered to the spirit of the brotherhood. From the beginning she divined so instinctively the vocation of the brotherhood and so utterly worshipped it, and her every thought and desire seemed so formed by its innermost wisdom, that Francis and the brethren regarded her not as a disciple of the fraternity but as one set by God to witness to them the truth and sanctity of their vocation; and they held her in high honour and pure affection because of what she was to them.

But Clare on her part was wholly unconscious of merit, and accepted the reverence with which the brethren surrounded her as an indication of the nobility of their own souls; and with a sweet lowliness would speak of herself as the little plant which Francis reared in the garden of Poverty.[1]

So it was that Clare was not as other women to the fraternity, and that Francis in her company thought of no danger to himself or the brethren, but took her as a sacred trust whose very presence on the earth would lead men to the worship and love of Christ.

After their first meeting, Clare visited Francis frequently. Perforce she went secretly unknown to her kinsfolk. It was not the occasion for nice hesitations. If one must needs seize one's liberty by violence, the blame is to those who make the violence necessary. Nor would her people themselves have acted otherwise had it been a matter of their secular interest. For generations her kinsfolk had carved out their fortune by personal decision and maintained themselves by regard to their own interest: it was the tradition of every feudal household. And Clare in this supreme moment of her

[1] Cf. Reg. S. Clare and her Testament, where the expression occurs: "*plantula B. P. Francisci*".

own fortune acted as her father's daughter. She took her decision into her own hands. But for modesty's sake she made a *confidante* of one of her relatives, an aunt of like character to her own, who accompanied her on her visits and abetted her resolution.[1]

From these meetings Clare returned home with increased longing to be free of the world, having in her heart "a vision of the eternal joys beside which the world appeared more and more contemptible; and more and more her soul melted with a holy yearning to perfect her espousals with the heavenly King". For "Francis acted as a faithful friend of the bridegroom," and Clare "listened to him with the utmost fervour of heart whenever he spoke of the love of Jesus".[2]

The Lenten season was drawing towards its close when Clare took the irrevocable step.

Palm Sunday[3] came, and all unknowing with what the day was burdened, Clare's family went to High Mass in the Cathedral at which the bishop was to bless and distribute the palms. For Clare it was her nuptial Mass and she dressed for it with more than usual care. The distribution of the blessed palms began, and her family approached the altar in their turn; but Clare did not move with them: overcome with emotion, she remained alone in her place. Whereupon the bishop left the altar and came and put a palm into her hand. Not improbably he was in her confidence and thus kindly gave her encouragement.

That night when her people had retired, Clare, still accompanied by her faithful friend, left her father's house.

Avoiding the common entrance, she went by a disused postern gate. The gateway was blocked by huge stones piled

[1] Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1238; A. Cristofani, op. cit. p. 92.
[2] Leg. S. Claræ, 6. [3] In 1212 Palm Sunday fell on 18 March.

between massive posts, but Clare had strength that night, and with her own hands she cleared the gate and they passed out. They came to the Porziuncola, where Francis and the brethren, having recited matins, were waiting to receive her, holding lighted torches in their hands; and there in the night-time Clare vowed herself to God, and Francis sheared off her hair as a symbol of her vow. And when the day dawned, Francis led her to the Benedictine convent of San Paolo at Bastia in the marsh, where the nuns offered her a shelter till Francis should find a home for her.[1]

That was how the Lady Clare fled from her father's house and came to the Porziuncola, trusting herself to the Providence of the God she sought and to the guidance of Francis. From that day Clare became one of the brotherhood. But not without a further test of strength. The following day the peace of the convent of San Paolo was violently disturbed by an incursion of Clare's kinsfolk clamouring for her return and threatening to take her by force. At their coming she took refuge in the church; and when they would have put hands on her, she unveiled her shorn head, and, laying hold of the altar, proclaimed her marriage with the service of Jesus Christ. Perhaps it was the old sense of awe at her predestination, perhaps her own calm strength, which stilled their threatening fury: for they went away, leaving her to the life of her choice.

After a few days Clare bade farewell to the nuns of San Paolo and went to lodge in the convent of Sant' Angelo in Panzo, situated on the slope of Monte Subasio little more

[1] The convent was destroyed in the fourteenth century to make way for a fortress, but the church still remains. The marsh has long since been drained. Bastia, owing to its position in the marsh, was known in early times as *Isola Romana*.

than a mile outside the city.[1] Here when hardly a second week had passed since her own flight, she was joined by her younger sister Agnes, resolved like herself to leave the world and be wholly dedicated to religion. Agnes's coming was a joy to both; for between these two there was a rare mutual affection. Agnes worshipped Clare with an admiring love for a greater strength in which she herself became strong; and Clare loved the clinging girl because of her sweet simplicity and companionable spirituality of mind.[2] And each day since she had left her father's house Clare had yearned for the younger sister's companionship in her enterprise, and Agnes had found life joyless since Clare had fled: and in their prayers both had prayed that they might again be brought together. Then at the end of a fortnight, Agnes followed Clare's example and fled secretly, and so came to the convent of Sant' Angelo.

But no sooner was her flight discovered than twelve of her kinsmen followed clamorously to the convent. Entering the chapel where the two sisters sought safety they, however, first spoke softly, thinking thus to win the young girl to return home, but when their soft persuasions failed, they no longer stemmed their anger but seized her by the hair and

[1] The nuns of Sant' Angelo some years later removed into the city, and had a convent on the site of the present seminary; but at this period they occupied the old convent outside the city, of which some ruins can still be seen. It was situated not far from Sasso Rosso, the supposed ancestral home of Clare. Cf. Vinc. Locatelli, *Vita di S. Chiara*, pp. 40-1; Fr. Paschal Robinson, *Life of St. Clare*, pp. 139-40. In 1238 the nuns of Sant' Angelo had adopted the Ugoline Rule—Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. p. 258.

[2] The character of Agnes reveals itself clearly in her charming letter to Clare which is found in Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 175. Agnes at the time of her flight was about fifteen years of age (Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1253; *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 177); but it will be remembered that this was a full marriageable age in those days.

dragged her intemperately from the altar out into the open ground; then taking her bodily they thought to force her homewards. Above the din of their imprecations, the voice of Agnes called to Clare to come and save her. Clare, in the first moment of their violence had cast herself prostrate before the altar, praying God to give her sister courage and to save her. Then with a renewed trust she rose up and hurried to her sister's rescue.

She overtook them a little way down the mountain side. Agnes lay helpless on the ground; for suddenly—whether it was that their fury had enfeebled them, or whatever the cause—these stout men found their burden too heavy for their strength and with a curse had flung her to the ground. One of them would have struck her in his rage; but just then Clare appeared in their midst and demanded that they cease their violence and leave her sister to her care.

And once again that strange power which Clare had to subdue people to her will, sent these men clamouring away. Then Clare took Agnes gently and led her back to the convent.[1] And after that they were not again parted until Agnes was sent to be abbess of a convent at Monticelli near Florence, some seven years later. And there she lived for more than thirty years, all the while yearning to be back again with Clare. But when Clare lay dying she sent for Agnes to come to her. Death did not separate them for long, for Agnes died three months after Clare, and was buried near her sister.[2]

Clare remained at Sant' Angelo until the following year; and then to her joy Francis obtained for her from the Bene-

[1] Leg. S. Claræ.

[2] See the life of St. Agnes, in Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 137 *seq.*; *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 357.

SAN DAMIANO

dictines of Monte Subasio, the use of the little church of San Damiano with the small house attached to it. The house was but a narrow comfortless building;[1] but to Clare it meant home. All through the months at Sant' Angelo she was like a bride yearning for the liberty of her own house. She was very definite as to the ideal poverty to which she was vowed and eager for its freedom, even as she always would be. And what made San Damiano the more sacred to her, was that Francis in rebuilding it, had foretold that it should be the home of poor ladies consecrated to the service of God. Clare treasured all such indications of Francis' thoughtfulness for herself and her sisters that were to be:[2] they gave her a wonderful sense of security; for adventurous and purposeful as she was, she confessed to herself her woman's need of a strength other than her own, in alliance with which her own strength becomes more supple and free. It is a need to which every true woman confesses; and in the noble sort it acts as a moral searchlight upon the characters of men, revealing the strong and the weak, the true and the unstable At San Damiano, then, she settled; glad that Francis had provided it for her; and under her fostering care, San Damiano became a companion home to the Porziuncola, with just that difference which a woman's heart and hand will make of any house. And in a short while other noble ladies of Assisi made San Damiano their home too.

Francis gave Clare no Rule of life: he merely set before her the inspiration of absolute poverty and of trust in the

[1] The convent of San Damiano still preserves many of its pristine features, and one may still see the refectory and dormitory and other rooms occupied by Clare and the sisters. The low narrow rooms speak eloquently of those first days of the Franciscan vocation. Cf. Ant. Cristofani, *La Storia della Chiesa e Chiostro di S. Damiano.*

[2] *Vide Testamentum S. Clarae*, in *Textus Orig.* (Quaracchi), p. 274.

infinite solicitude of God.[1] For the rest, Clare shaped her daily course by the example of the brethren so far as a woman might properly go with them. She gave herself to prayer and manual labour;[2] was helpful to the sick who came to her for comfort,[3] and welcomed the brethren whenever they visited the sisters to discourse about Jesus Christ and the spiritual life.[4] Her daily bread was provided for partly by the produce of a small vegetable garden which she cultivated;[5] partly by the alms which the brethren begged for her and her sisters, even as they begged for themselves. It was a simple homely life at San Damiano, filled however with keen spiritual interests and a vital delight in the vocation of holy poverty. That vocation meant to them a great liberty of soul; and in whatever fashion the soul finds its liberty, it finds its

[1] In her Rule (cap. VI), Clare wrote: "*Scripsit nobis formam vivendi in hunc modum*," etc. But this "*forma vivendi*" can hardly be called a Rule in the ordinary sense of the word. It is merely a promise on the part of Francis to have a special care and solicitude for the sisters. But it states as a motive for this promise that the sisters have "chosen to live according to the perfection of the Holy Gospel". In the mind of St. Francis "the perfection of the Gospel" always meant absolute poverty.

Concerning the development of the Rule of the Poor Clares see *The Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare, ut supra*, Introduction, pp. 11-31.

[2] See the letter of Jacques de Vitry, written in 1216, when he was passing through Italy. Referring to the Poor Clares he writes: "*Mulieres vero juxta civitates in diversis hospitiis simul commorantur nihil accipiunt sed de labore manuum vivunt*" (Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect.* p. 295). The words "*nihil accipiunt*" probably refer to offerings and bequests such as other religious received. They cannot mean that the sisters did not receive alms of food and other necessaries. *Vide supra*, p. 113; *vide* Leg. S. Claræ, 37.

[3] In the Leg. S. Claræ, 32, it is related that Francis was accustomed to send the sick to Clare to be signed with the sign of the Cross. But Blessed Agnes of Prague, a close imitator of Clare used also to cook food for the poor and mend the clothes of lepers. (*Acta SS. Mart.* tom. I. p. 510). It is probable therefore that the sisters at San Damiano did similar acts of charity.

[4] Leg. S. Claræ, 37. [5] Cf. Reg. S. Claræ, cap. vi.

paradise. The enclosure of San Damiano might be narrow measured by the yard-tape, but what did it matter to those who lived constantly on the wings of a joyous faith and whose spiritual horizon was limitless as the heavenly love which was in their hearts?

Even the very earth was not so strange to them now as when they lived in their fathers' houses: it was the earth which the gospel of Poverty was to purify and win back to the law of Christ. From their enclosure they followed the active apostolate of the brethren with an alert interest and solicitude, born of their love of Christ and the world which they yearned to see His: and in the brethren's apostolate they had their part; if they might not go out to preach—for that was not a woman's work—they could pray, and besides that, they had to guard in their seclusion the sacred fire which the brethren were to spread abroad. There were times indeed when Clare envied the brethren their opportunities of spending themselves in carrying the Gospel to the infidels and those who knew not Christ; and perhaps had she lived in other days, she might have been the foundress of a body of missionary women.[1] But the time for that had not yet come;[2] and in any case the world may be grateful that Clare was kept to feed the beacon-fire of San Damiano with her heroic intensity of a pure spiritual longing: for indeed in no more effectual way could she have realized her own ideal of

[1] Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1251, where he relates how Clare on hearing of the martyrdom of the friars in Morocco in 1220, wanted to go herself to Morocco "to shed her blood for Christ," but was restrained by Francis.

[2] At this period the Church did not favour the active ministry of consecrated women, nor indeed for some centuries later. Owing to the circumstances of the time enclosure became more and more the law of all convents of women. Cardinal Ugolino made enclosure one of the fundamental principles of his reform of religious houses of women.

becoming "God's helpmate and the support and encouragement of the frail members of His ineffable body,"[1] as all will admit who know the story of her life.

Oftentimes in following out the history of the fraternity one asks oneself what course that history would have taken had that convent of San Damiano not existed? And at such moments one is apt to think of that hillside enclosure as a lighthouse set in the sea and composedly flashing out its message of warning or comfort in the storm to the boats that pass by. For these years of early hopes and unwavering faith which as yet fold the brethren in a comforting embrace, must in the very nature of human affairs make way for the troublous years when faith will clash with earthly experience. For an association which embodies a vital ideal is much like a human personality: it has its youth when the ideal treads lightly upon the earth and the world mostly draws aside in indifference or admiration, not to impede the way. But as the youth's purpose becomes more tangible and his incipient manhood must be reckoned with, then the earth itself becomes more ponderous and the world demands its toll and, most difficult of all, the heart of the man himself is apt to be befogged by a consciousness of the earth and his simple delight in his ideal to be shadowed by conflicting interests. And that fate especially awaits the man or institution in whom there is the urgency to subject the world itself to the ideal. Those troublous years are not far ahead for the fraternity of poverty; and then the clear vision and indomitable loyalty of Clare in all that concerns the faith of the brotherhood will be a saving influence; and San Damiano, a constant witness to the pure Franciscan spirit.

[1] *Vide* Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague, *Acta SS. Mart.* tom. I. p. 502; Mrs. Balfour, op. cit. p. 147.

From the first settling at San Damiano, Clare became in some measure an arbiter of the destiny of the fraternity, both by her decisive fashioning of her own life and that of her community, and also by the clear-sighted counsel she at times gave to Francis and the brethren. In her own household she would have no weak compromise with any principles which were not of a piece with her own vocation, at least in the things which mattered. In the first days this was easy enough to manage. But a new convent, and one that from circumstances promised to become a kindling light to other religious communities, could not long continue without ecclesiastical supervision: and then the difficulties began.

Clare, with her practical good sense, early took the precaution to obtain from Pope Innocent III "the privilege," as it was termed, of absolute poverty,[1] such as Francis had taught her to observe. That was in 1215, in which year the sisterhood became a canonical religious community.[2] Exactly how this development occurred it is now impossible to tell, or whether it was due to the initiative of Francis or of the Bishop of Assisi or of some other prelate in authority. Until then, Clare had refused to assume any title or style of a religious superior, in which she was but following the example of Francis himself; but in 1215 she was compelled to take the office of abbess, though in her sweet humility she begged that another should be given the headship. Her troubles began four years later when Cardinal Ugolino, the Papal Legate for Central and Northern Italy, endeavoured to impose upon the sisters at San Damiano and its kindred sisterhoods—for by this time San Damiano had become the

[1] *Testamentum B. Clarae*, in Seraph. Legislat. Textus (Quaracchi), p. 277.
[2] Cf. *Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare*, Introduction, p. 20.

exemplar of other communities of women—a Rule of his own composition.[1]

These Ugoline Constitutions, as this Rule was afterwards styled, will be considered later on in this history: here it suffices to mention that they tended to form the sisters into a new order distinct from the Franciscan fraternity. Henceforth until the day preceding her death, Clare's life was a long struggle to maintain her Franciscan prerogatives and her inclusion in the Franciscan family.

With a gentle reasonableness in which there was no rancour, yet with an inflexible determination, she wooed the authorities to recognize her Franciscan vocation; and her persistency regained first one position, then another. At the time the Ugoline Constitutions were promulgated, Francis was in the East on a mission to the infidels, and the courage of the first protest fell upon Clare herself. Cardinal Ugolino, taking the sisters under his own jurisdiction, appointed a Cistercian monk to be their visitor or director, but even before Francis' return the Cistercian monk was replaced by a friar, Philip the Long, one of Francis' first companions.[2]

It is not an unlikely presumption, from what we know of the development of the contest, that Philip's appointment was an answer to the prayers of Clare. On Francis' return he took upon himself the direct guidance of the sisters at San Damiano,[3] and this secured Clare and her own community

[1] Cf. *ibid.* Introduction, p. 17 *seq.* The Ugoline Constitutions will be found in Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. pp. 263-7; also *ibid.* pp. [illegible]; and again *ibid.* pp. 476-83, with the modifications of Innocent IV.

[2] Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. p. 46; Chron. Jordani, no. 13 in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 5.

[3] Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1219. It is, upon present evidence, impossible to say how far the Ugoline Constitutions were observed at San Damiano during the life time of St. Clare. It is certain that in the [illegible] matter of fasting San Damiano observed the milder law given by St. Francis. (Cf. the third letter of St. Clare to Bl. Agnes of Prague in *Acta Sanct.*, die 6 Mart., tom VII.

in the practice of absolute poverty, even if it did not give them the absolute right to it. But Francis did not claim any jurisdiction over the other communities of Poor Ladies, and these remained subject to the Ugoline Rule, much to the grief of Clare herself. This perhaps was the period when she suffered most acutely and had most need of her courage. Even Francis himself seemed weighed down by the troubles which had come upon the brotherhood in the process of its new developments; and at one time he seems to have been ready in sheer weariness of spirit to see the links broken which bound San Damiano to the brotherhood; but Clare in her sympathy with him understood, and her tenacious loyalty again saved the situation.[2] Francis, who had long abstained from visiting the sisters, was induced to visit them again: and in his last years Clare never lacked his advice and encouragement. At the end when he lay dying, his last message to her was to stand firm in the poverty she had vowed.[3]

With that message vibrating in her soul, on the morrow of Francis' canonization, she claimed from Pope Gregory IX, who had been Cardinal Ugolino, a formal confirmation of the "privilege of most high poverty," granted her thirteen years before by Innocent III; and Gregory acceded to her demand.[4] He had previously pleaded with her to accept some small property to secure the community against want; and lest Clare should be hesitating because of her vow, he had offered her a dispensation. Clare had replied: "Holy Father, never shall I wish to be dispensed from following

p. 507.) Gregory IX, in his letter *Angelis Gaudium* (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 343), speaks of the customs observed at San Damiano as being contrary to the Ugoline Constitutions.

[1] Cf. II Celano, 205; see also Fioretti, cap. XIV.

[2] Cf. Reg. S. Claræ, cap. VI.

[3] Cf. *Seraph. Legislat. Text.* pp. 97-8; Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. p. 771. *Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare*, Introduction, pp. 23-4.

Jesus Christ".[1] On another occasion too did Clare's swift decision cause Pope Gregory to retract his words. He had decreed that the friars should no longer, as had been their wont, visit the sisters of San Damiano, save those brethren who were sent to beg alms for them. On learning of this decree Clare met the brothers who came to do the questing for the sisters, and bade them go back to their minister and say that since the friars might not visit San Damiano to instruct the sisters by their godly conversation and thus feed their souls, she would have no friar beg bread for their bodies. At that Pope Gregory revoked his decree.[2] But it was many years yet before another Pope, Innocent IV, granted to all the communities of the Poor Ladies the same privilege which Clare had gained for herself, and not until then was Clare at peace. It was as though she lived the last years of her life, only to establish them all in their Franciscan birthright; for she died two days after Pope Innocent IV affixed his signature to the Rule which she had caused to be written as the charter of their liberty.[3] In everything that did not infringe the essential character of the Franciscan life Clare had gracefully submitted to the will of the Pontiffs: she accepted the Ugolino regulations save in the matter of poverty, though she tempered their rigidity with a gentle considerateness for the weaker sisters in matters of superadded austerities. But she was tenacious of the right of the sisters to be guided in the spiritual life by the brethren and to be considered as one religious family with them. Instinctively she knew that it

[1] Leg. S. Claræ, 14.

[2] Leg. S. Claræ, 37. It is, however, doubtful whether Gregory IX intended the prohibition—that the friars should not visit the houses of the Poor Clares without apostolic permission—to apply to San Damiano. He had already on Dec. 14, 1227, in his letter *Quoties Cordis* (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 36), committed the care of the sisters at San Damiano to the Minister-General, John Parenti, and his successors, with a strict injunction to "bestow on them such care and solicitude as a good shepherd bestows on the lambs of the flock". The Pope's readiness to mend matters when St. Clare protested, favours the conclusion that John Parenti had given too rigid an interpretation to the bull *Quo elongati*.

[3] Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. pp. 671-8; *Seraph. Legislat. Text.* pp. 49-95.

was only in this union of the Franciscan family that the sisters would be maintained in their true character and life; and instinctively too perhaps she felt that only in this union would the brethren themselves be kept loyal to the pure ideal of their founder. For none recognized more clearly than she, how surely the prudence of the world would beset the fraternity and sow dissensions in its ranks unless it was kept steadfast in the security of its own faith and circumscribed by strong mutual charity. And so when dissensions did appear within the fraternity, Clare was not of those who widened the rift by intemperate argument. Utterly loyal she stood by the pure Franciscan ideal, and never wavered nor was uncertain in her witness to it: yet she was no partisan within the family.

Much as she must have differed from the secular policy of Brother Elias, she would have him reverenced and obeyed as the minister of the whole Franciscan family.[1] And perhaps it was that lofty spirit which soared above the rancour and clamour of the world's battles, which was the secret of her power, and extorted admiration even from those whom she compelled to bow to her claims. Certainly Cardinal Ugolino worshipped the abbess of San Damiano with a father's affection for a favourite daughter and a client's love for a favourite saint;[2] and Pope Innocent IV, who long withstood her appeals but eventually granted all her demand, would have canonized her on the day of her burial had not the cardinals protested against the appearance of unseemly hurry.[3]

When Clare at length died, twenty-four years after

[1] *Vide* second letter of St. Clare to Agnes of Prague, in *Acta SS. Martii*. vol. I. p. 505; *Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare*, p. 144.

[2] *Vide* letter of Gregory IX to St. Clare in Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 188.

[3] Leg. S. Claræ, 47.

Francis had gone to his rest, she left the community of San Damiano established in the pure observance of Franciscan Poverty and in the essential Franciscan life, and that whilst the brethren were still disputing as to the wisdom of the Rule which Francis had written.

We have anticipated something of Franciscan history in order to show what manner of woman Clare was and what her coming meant to the brethren at the Porziuncola and how she brought to the fraternity a new element of strength.

But in the imagination of the world outside her coming cast a new and tender glory over the religious revival which had already set in through the preaching of the brethren. In her the self-renunciation and endurance of the brethren which had compelled the reverence of the citizens, gained a more subtle and sublimated beauty. The purely heroic at the Porziuncola became the worshipful at San Damiano. There is no record of any harshness on the part of the people towards Clare and her sisters, but only of love and wonderment: their eyes turned towards the convent below the hill as they would have turned towards the home of Nazareth, and they mingled their willing services for Clare with an adoring homage. Was not her mere touch sufficient to rid the sick of their maladies? And did not the air seem purer and more morally wholesome because of her presence?

That was in fact the great miracle: from the convent of San Damiano purity radiated like sunlight over the whole country-side. Evil desire was shamed both in men and women. The women longed to be pure as Clare, and men learned to reverence their purity and to be pure themselves. "From every side," says he who first penned her story, "women 'ran to the odour of her ointments';[1] virgins hastened after her

[1] A quotation from Cant. I. 3.

example to consecrate themselves to Christ; married women lived more chastely; young men in eager crowds, spurred on by the heroic example of the weaker sex, cast aside the allurements of the flesh."[1] And for that, more than for aught else, Clare was loved, because in an age which sang of chivalry, she gave to the world a vision of pure women strong in faith and fearless in loyalty.

[1] Leg. S. Claræ, 10.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST ATTEMPTS TO REACH THE INFIDELS.

The Lady Clare had been but a few months with the nuns of Sant' Angelo in Panso when the news of the great victory of the Christian army of Spain sent a thrill of excitement through all Christendom. The Moorish power had been overwhelmed at Las Navas on 16 July. Innocent III had awaited the result of the campaign with anxiety;[1] upon its issue depended much of his future policy. Now the possibility of a new and successful crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land seemed nearer. It would be difficult to over-estimate the effect of the news upon the minds of the more devout in every Catholic country. They received it gratefully as a sign of Heaven's favour, and as a new incentive to give good service for the faith of Christ: for the infidels were the scourge of the Christian world sent as a punishment by God, because of the sin and indifference to religion amongst the Christian peoples. And the indevout were stirred too: for the victory of Las Navas they knew would press forward the movement for a new crusade contemplated by the Pope. But to none did the good news come as a signal for action more emphatically than to Francis. He too was elated, as were all true Christians, at

[1] Cf. *Innocent III. Regest.* lib. xv. 15 [ed. Migne], Epist. *Quanta nunc necessitas.*

this victory of the Cross: but through his elation there ran a swift pity for the infidel fighting against God. Perhaps in his simplicity he thought that so great a disaster would make them more ready to recognize their errors. At any rate he felt called to go and preach to them the faith of the Cross. And so it was that the battle of Las Navas became incidentally a factor in the evolution of the Franciscan apostolate.

Hitherto the journeyings undertaken by the brethren had not extended very far beyond the confines of Umbria. Francis himself had spent the greater part of the preceding year in evangelizing the northern borders of Umbria and also Tuscany, and in this latter province had established several hermitages and left small colonies of the brethren. At Florence he had received many novices into the fraternity; amongst them John Parenti, a Doctor of Laws, who many years later will succeed Francis as Minister-General of the Order. And here, too, he founded one of the first houses of the brethren outside Umbria; for the citizens opened their hearts to him and gave him a small house near the church of San Gallo outside the city, where some of the brethren might dwell. He went too as far as Pisa, where at his preaching two young men begged to be allowed to join his company: they were Agnellus, the future leader of the brethren on their coming to England, and Albert who succeeded Agnellus as Minister-Provincial of the English Province and then became Minister-General of the Order.[1]

Yet it was chiefly in the country around Lake Thrasymene that Francis had worked that year. He had passed the whole of the great Lent in seclusion upon one of the

[1] Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1211.

islands in the lake—the Isola Maggiore;[1] then he went forth to evangelize the neighbourhood.

So he came to Cortona and preached there. Now when the sermon was concluded a youth named Guy approached Francis and offered him a lodging in his house. He was a noble youth and very wealthy, but quite unspoiled by his possessions which he held as a trust for the poor; and always he gave to the poor whatever he did not need for his own frugal maintenance. Francis gladly accepted his proffered hospitality. That evening Guy waited upon Francis and his companion as upon most honoured guests; he washed their feet with reverence and himself served them at supper; and when the meal was over he begged that they would consider his goods as their own and whenever they were in want of habits or anything else allow him to supply their need. Francis was entirely won by the youth's open-handed generosity and his delicate courtesy; and when he and his companion were retiring to rest, he said: "My dear brother, this noble youth, who is so mindful of and grateful to God, and so loving and courteous towards his neighbours and the poor, would do well for our life and company. For know you, dear brother, that courtesy is one of the properties of God, who of His courtesy, gives His sun and rain to the just and the unjust: and courtesy is the sister of charity by which hatred is extinguished and love is cherished. And because I have seen so much divine virtue in this man, therefore gladly would I have him for a companion." And at that Francis began to

[1] *Vide Fioretti*, cap. VI.; cf. 1 Celano, 60. Tradition points out a miraculous well on Isola Maggiore, which was granted to the prayer of Francis: "it is good for headaches," the fishermen of the lake will tell you. A convent of friars was later built on the island; the convent church now stands uncared for and desolate, since the expulsion of the friars about 1862. Many frescoes attributed to Gozzoli adorn the walls, but they are becoming hardly distinguishable.

pray that Guy might become one of the fraternity. Guy meanwhile felt a keen desire not merely to befriend his guests in their needs but to be one with them in their life, and shortly afterwards he came and cast himself on his knees before Francis, asking to be admitted into his company. So he distributed all his goods to the poor, and afterwards in the public church received the habit of Poverty.

Now some little distance from Cortona, at the foot of the high hill on which the city is built, and on the other side from the low ground which stretches out to Lake Thrasymene, there is a gurgling rivulet which comes from the mountains, passing down its rocky course through a deep ravine; and by the side of this rivulet there were then some rock caves.

Hither Francis and Guy now betook themselves, and made a narrow hermitage so near to the rivulet that its waters sprayed the walls of their caves.[1] And there Guy made his abode until his death many years later. He divided his days between prayer and manual work, even when after a time he was ordained priest by obedience. Now and then he interrupted his life of contemplation and climbed the long hill and preached to the people of the city: but it was mostly by his life that he preached to them: and the Celle—the caves in which Guy and his companions lived—became a constant admonition to the citizens, of the life which is beyond this earth.[2]

[1] In the present friary of the Celle, one is still shown the original cave-hermitage; but additions were made to the original building by Brother Elias, the Vicar-General of St. Francis, and later on by the Capuchins in the sixteenth century. As it stands, however, the Celle is one of the few remaining convents of the Order which retain the primitive character of Franciscan "loci". Even the latest additions are in keeping with the earlier buildings.

[2] Cf. *Acta SS. Vita B. Guidonis*, die 12 Junii, tom. II. p. 601 *seq.* It is probable, as J. Jörgensen has pointed out, that Guy is the hero of the story related in the *Fioretti*, cap. 36.

At Cortona, too, about the same time that Guy entered the fraternity, Francis is said to have received another postulant—one whose name will become famous in the years that follow: more famous than that of Guy, but not so blessed —Brother Elias, of whom we shall hear much before the close of this story.[1]

Francis also evangelized the district to the south-east of the lake, and left remembrances of his tour in the hermitages he established for his brethren at Cetona and Sarteano in the mountains.[2] It was at Sarteano that Francis endured and overcame a great temptation. For one night whilst he was in prayer he was tempted to repent him of the life of penance he had undertaken, but immediately arousing himself he cast away the thought. But to that temptation there succeeded another, and though Francis scourged himself till his body was discoloured and wealed, yet the temptation persisted. It was then winter and the hillside was covered with snow. Unable by scourgings to subdue his recalcitrant body, Francis rushed out naked into the snow and builded up seven snow heaps. Then in his southern fashion he turned upon himself, exclaiming: "That large heap is thy wife, those four are thy two sons and two daughters, the other two are thy manservant and maidservant. Make haste to clothe them all for they are dying of cold." Thus he continued to make mockery bravely of his temptation, until starved with the bitter cold, he retorted upon himself: "If the care of them

[1] The *Vita B. Guidonis*, loc. cit., says that at the Celle, Francis also received *Elias de Villa Ursaria*. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1211, takes this Elias to be the Brother Elias so famous in Franciscan history. It is however doubtful; for Elias, the Vicar-General, was more probably born in Assisian territory (*vide infra*, p. 259).

[2] Tradition puts the establishment of these hermitages in the beginning of 1212. Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, *ad an.* 1212.

thus troubles thee, betake thyself to serve God only". The temptation vanished and Francis returned to his cell thanking God.[1]

Meanwhile others of the brethren were carrying the message of Poverty to other cities and districts. Brother Bernard da Quintavalle had been sent to Bologna, where scholars from all parts of the Italian peninsula crowded the law-schools for which the city was famous throughout all Europe. It was a somewhat bold adventure to carry the Gospel of simplicity and unworldliness into the midst of this active world of youthful intellectual ambitions and conceits: and surely it was the imperious instinct of destiny which took the brethren thither, as an invading army must make for the strongholds of the country invaded. For nowhere was the spirit of the world in more direct contrast with the spirit which created the fraternity than in the law-schools of Bologna. There the wisdom of the heart wholly docile to the word of Christ, which was the only wisdom Francis valued, was wholly at a discount. Men did not go to the schools to learn the truth of life or how to live as Christians should who have eternal souls to think about: indeed most of the scholars would have laughed at the very notion. Knowledge was to the student what bales of cloth were to the merchant, a commodity for making one's way in this world and getting, if need be, the better of one's neighbour. The very atmosphere of the schools breathed a subtle materialism: intellectual conceit and pedantry were its ordinary products: affectation of intellectual superiority went hand in hand with a callous brutality and licentiousness.

To Bologna, then, the grave and courteous Bernard da Quintavalle had gone, having first commended his journey to

[1] II Celano, 116.

the Lord Christ his Master. He was received as an object of sport by the students and citizens. When he appeared in the streets he was mobbed and ill-treated. But in the end his meekness and constancy came out victorious. An influential citizen, who was also a doctor of laws, one named Nicholas di Pepoli, won by the evident holiness of the ill-used friar, befriended him and gave him a lodging, and after a time established the brethren in a house just outside the city. And Bernard came to be reverenced by the people as a saint, until in his humility he fled away, more fearful of the honours than of the ill-treatment. Appearing before Francis, Bernard said to him: "The house is founded near the city of Bologna; command the brothers that they maintain it and stay there; but I have no more profit there because of the too great honour which is paid me: for I fear I should lose more than I should gain". So Francis sent other brethren to Bologna, and these in time spread the fame of the fraternity throughout all Lombardy.[1]

Thus had Francis and the brethren exercised themselves in their vocation, when, as we have said, the victory of Las Navas set men thinking of the crusade, and turned the thoughts of Francis towards the conversion of the infidels.

It was not in his character to make any elaborate preparation for a new adventure. When a knightly service called him, he as true knight must obey. Nor indeed was there any need for delaying preparations. The weapons of his warfare were always ready, his pity for men who knew not God and his own fervent faith. His mission, he would

[1] Cf. *Vita Fr. Bernardi* in Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Anal. Franc.* III. pp. 36-7; *Actus S. Franc.* cap. 4; *Fioretti*, cap. 4; Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1211; *Vide Acta SS.* mense Oct. tom. II. p. 843 *seq.*; Hilarin de Lucerne, *Histoire des Études*, p. 132.

always aver, was that of herald or messenger of the Divine Redeemer: when he had delivered his message and won men to the Christ-like life he must leave it to others—the clergy and rulers of the earth—to organize and govern Christ's kingdom.

So with just his faith and pity he set out on this mission to distant lands as he had undertaken his journeys in Catholic Italy. After all, God would be with him whether he was amongst Christians or infidels. And if the infidels would not be won by his preaching and he must attest his faith by martyrdom, as very likely would happen were God to grant such grace to his unworthiness, he would die the better for the simplicity of his obedience to the call. It might seem strange to those who do not know Francis, that he thus unhesitatingly set out for a far-off land, prepared to die on his quest, whilst yet the fraternity was hardly established. But Francis did not look upon himself as necessary to the growth of the brotherhood. God could foster His own work and raise up another leader for the guidance of the brethren. The one thing which mattered was that he should obey the Divine will and set the brethren an example of knightly fidelity to the vocation in which they were called.

It was probably in the autumn of 1212 that he took boat for Syria, sailing from Ancona. But this true call of his spirit—for true it was, as we shall see—was not to be fulfilled in so direct a fashion. Hardly had they set sail when a storm arose, and the vessel, driven out of its course, was cast upon the coast of Dalmatia. There for a time Francis and his fellow-passengers were stranded. It was now impossible to proceed to the Holy Land; there was even a difficulty in getting a return passage to Italy. Francis had no money to pay his way and the masters of the boats in those parts, did not appreciate his plea of poverty. Eventually when all per-

suasion proved fruitless, Francis had recourse to the stratagem of the needy. He and his companion were smuggled on board a vessel about to sail, with the connivance of one of the crew, who also undertook the care of a plentiful supply of provisions which a timely friend provided for the brethren's use. And this forethought proved of greater advantage to them than was at first designed. For the weather being still stormy the boat was long delayed on its journey so that the sailors ran short of food: but Francis shared his provisions with them and thus won their hearts, and by the time the boat reached the port of Ancona, Francis had found a reverent audience who listened willingly to his fervent discourses.[1]

Thus his first endeavour to reach the infidels resulted only in his evangelizing the crew of a ship, at least so far as the result was then visible. But as in much that Francis did, the value was not in the immediate achievement; it was rather in the inspiring idea. That yearning of his soul towards the strangers who stand outside the kingdom of Christ will remain with him all through his life, and send him forth again in attempts to win them to the Gospel of his Lord; and all his attempts will seem fruitless of their purpose: and yet they will set in the heart of the Christian world a new policy towards the peoples whom all Christendom regarded only as the enemies of the Cross.

The crusades had indeed been forced upon the Christian nations as a measure of defence: that was their initial justification. But it is hard to wage war with a people and yet retain for them the elemental charity which the Divine Redeemer came to cast over the earth. In the course of the crusades Christendom had come to look upon the infidels as

[1] I Celano, 55; *Tract. de Mirac.* 33; *Leg. Maj.* IX. 5.

an evil race, to be exterminated or brought to submission by the sword. That was the prevalent notion. True, attempts were occasionally made to convince them of their errors by argument. Popes themselves had written letters to the Sultans in this strain. But these overtures were of the sort which the general of an army might make in the hope of obtaining a bloodless submission.

Altogether different was the spirit in which Francis dreamed his dream of converting them. The infidels were souls for whom Christ had died, and he would bring to them the message of the Christ for their own salvation. Fondly he hoped that if this message were brought to them without the din of secular warfare or the debatability of worldly argument, they would listen. At least he would meet them in the spirit of the Redeemer, and if need be, die meekly at their hands, as Christ had died, offering his life for their salvation.

Such was the new and spiritual crusade which he conceived in the simplicity of his own piety and faith. He himself might accomplish but little in the way of actual conversion amongst the infidel nations; for that is frequently the way with the most vitalizing ideals: they need to be transplanted into a less sensitive soil from that in which they are born, before they actualize into tangible results. Francis' ideas concerning the vocation of the fraternity had the essential vitality of ideal truth. Oftentimes they were of too pure a spirituality to be wholly acceptable to ordinary mortals; yet were they as a flame which purged the accepted standards of much of their grossness; and sometimes they cast a glamour of conviction about new and exalted ways, and thus opened them to a more common acceptance. So it was with his idea of converting the infidel by the power of the Gospel itself. That idea became an integral element in the life of the frater-

nity, scattering the brethren in after years into distant lands beyond the confines of Christendom; sending them forth in their poverty and faith without the aid of secular arms or diplomacy, even as the Apostles went forth in the first days of the Gospel.[1] And that was one of the good things Francis did for Christendom: he fanned in the Church a new enthusiasm for the conversion rather than for the conquest of "the enemies of the Cross". That first attempt of Francis to reach the infidels, which stranded him on the shores of Christian Dalmatia, was therefore no true failure, but the first sowing of a seed which will blossom when the winter is past.

On his return to Italy Francis undertook evangelizing tours through the Marches of Ancona and Umbria: yet not without first experiencing a period of doubt as to whether he was personally called to the active ministry of preaching or to the secluded apostolate of prayer. But we cannot say whether this time of hesitation followed at once upon the frustration of his design to preach to the infidels, or a little later in consequence of another incident the story of which we will now relate.

About the end of the spring of 1213, Francis was preaching in the Romagna when he came to Montefeltro on a spur of the Apennines as you enter Tuscany. It was a small fortress-town perched upon a rocky ledge high in the mountains and ruled by the lord of the castle around which the town was built. The place was in high festival when Francis arrived, for a relative of the lord of Montefeltro had lately been knighted and the event was being celebrated with song and

[1] The letters of Gregory IX reveal the marvellous activity of the Franciscan friars as simple missionaries amongst the infidels. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. pp. 93, 100, 102, 106, 155, 233, 269.

tourney and all the gay pleasantry of a feudal feast; and from all the neighbourhood the friends of the knight had gathered to do him honour. It was just an occasion to fire the imagination of Francis. The symbols of chivalry never left him unmoved. A great company had gathered in the courtyard of the castle perhaps to witness a joust at arms or maybe a minstrels' contest. Francis pressed forward, and mounting upon a parapet, besought the grace of the company that he might speak. Entering into the spirit of the scene he took as the text of his discourse a couplet of a minstrel's song:—

> Tanto è il bene ch' aspetto
> Ch' ogni pena m' è diletto "—

"So great is the good I have in sight,—In every hardship I delight". And straightway he launched into a recital of the service of Christ as set forth in the heroic endurance of the Apostles and martyrs and holy men and women, who in their joy of the heavenly vision had deemed penance and even death as a small price for so great a gain.

Now amongst the listeners was the lord Orlando dei Cattani, lord of Chiusi in Casentino; and such was the effect of the discourse upon him, that when Francis had finished speaking and had gone down amongst the crowd, Orlando sought him out and begged that he might confer with him concerning his soul's salvation. "Right willingly," replied Francis, "but this morning thou must do honour to thy friends and dine with them and after thou hast dined we will confer together." So Orlando dined with his friends and afterwards he and Francis sat long in conference, and at the end Orlando offered Francis a retreat on Monte Alvernia high up in the solitudes of the Apennines, for the use of the brethren: it was a place, he said, remote from the high-roads

and most suitable for contemplation and the penitential life. Francis gladly accepted the offer and promised to send brethren there at once. He himself was now bound for Assisi, but later on, he too would follow the brethren.[1]

Now it may be that this gracious act of the lord Orlando, in setting apart for the use of the brethren the secluded retreat of Monte Alvernia, coming so shortly after the failure to reach the infidels, may have caused Francis to doubt the heavenly source of the inspiration which sent him upon that apparently bootless journey, and to doubt further whether after all his part in the work of the fraternity was that of a missionary at all. Not every brother was called to preach; some would fulfil the vocation of the brotherhood better in the activity of the contemplative life. In prayerful solitude these would cultivate the intensity of spirit which is apt to be lost on the world's highways, and be as a flame enkindling the preachers with spiritual fire.

Hence Francis deemed that in the fraternity there should always be some who would be wholly given to the interior life of contemplative prayer, whilst others were employed in the ministry of the divine word. And about this time he was hesitating as to his own proper part in the life of the fraternity.

He was again at the Porziuncola when this doubt came

[1] *Fioretti*, I Consid. Stim.; *Actus*, cap. 9. The date of the donation of Alvernia is attested by the *Instrumentum donationis Montis Alvernæ* to be 8 May, 1213. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* IV. p. 156, n. *h.*—The *Fioretti* characteristically weaves the story of the donation into the story of the Stigmata, the principal event in Francis' life connected with Monte Alvernia: but the description of the sermon bears every trace of authenticity. Compare it with I Celano, 23; 3 *Soc.* 25; *Leg. Maj.* III. 2; and also with the description of Francis' style of preaching in the letter of Thomas of Spalatro (*infra*, p. 359).

to a head: but whether it was before he met the lord Orlando or after, we cannot definitely say.[1]

Unwilling now to trust to his own judgment, Francis called Brother Masseo and telling him all his doubt, bade him go to Sister Clare and beg her first to pray to God and then declare to him what God should put into her mind concerning this matter; and Masseo was to go to Brother Sylvester also, who was then in solitary retreat, and beg him in like manner to say what God willed. On Masseo's return Francis received him ceremoniously as the ambassador of God and washed his feet and made for him a repast. Afterwards they went together into the wood, and there Francis threw himself upon his knees and stretched forth his arms in the form of a cross and thus listened to Masseo. Both Sister Clare and Brother Sylvester, Masseo told him, had declared that Francis' vocation was to go forth into the world and preach the Gospel for the salvation of souls; for that the grace of the vocation was not given him for himself alone but also for the saving of others. Hearing this, Francis rose up and said with fervent conviction: "Then let us go forth in the name of God". And taking with him Brothers Masseo and Angelo Tancredi, he without any delay set out on a journey. He took the road which leads across the valley, going by the further side towards Spoleto.

As he went along, his mind wholly free from troublous doubt, all the country-side seemed to respond to the joyous gratitude towards God which filled his soul, and a closer

[1] More probably it was after the donation of Alvernia, when St. Clare was already at San Damiano with the sisters who had joined her. So I conclude from the wording of the *Leg. Maj.* XII. 2. M. Sabatier places the appeal to St. Clare and Bro. Sylvester after the journey to Spain; but the wording of Celano more naturally points to the period immediately following the return from Slavonia (Dalmatia) and preceding the journey to Spain.

kinship between him and the earth suddenly revealed itself.

They had passed through Cannara, which you can reach in about two hours' walking from Assisi, and were on their way to Bevagna, another two hours' easy going, allowing for the fatigue of the lengthening journey, when they came to the place now called Pian d' Arca, where the white road is flanked on either side with wide-stretching verdant fields, with here and there a group of trees casting a kindly shadow in the hot sunlight. At this spot Francis' attention was arrested by a multitude of birds of all sorts, who had gathered there perhaps because of the fine harvests: and at the sight of them and the sound of their many voices, he felt a great tenderness towards them, and there came upon him a yearning to make himself a brother to these merry creatures of God.

At that, he bade his companions stand still, and himself ran forward into the midst of the birds, half afraid though he was that they might fly away at his approach. But instead, and to his surprise, they remained in position as though awaiting him. And for this Francis felt very grateful and grew more tender. He greeted them with his usual greeting: "My brothers, God give you peace"; and began to speak caressingly to them. "My brother birds," he said, "much ought you to praise your Creator and to love Him always; Him Who has given you feathers for clothing, wings for flight and all that you have need of. God has made you noble among His creatures, for He has given you a dwelling in the purity of the air, and though you neither sow nor reap, He yet protects and governs you without any care of your own." In such wise he spoke to them; and they at the sound of his voice grew more confident and came nearer and

moved their heads to look at him and spread out their wings in great contentment and twittered their trust in him. Then seeing how trustful and friendly they were, Francis moved about amongst them: yet they showed no fear. At length he blessed them with the sign of the cross and bade them depart: and only then did they fly away.[1]

Francis and his two companions then proceeded on their way to Bevagna. But that had happened to Francis which even he himself hardly yet understood. The earth had opened to him another of its great secrets. Once before the mystery of life had lifted and he had found himself in spirit a brother to the outcast and the leper; and that had been the beginning of his new life. To-day it was a like happening. He had run to the birds in a heightened sense of that friendliness which he had always felt for the brute creatures and which had before often won their confidence.[2]

But as he went on his way he was conscious of a new and different feeling. It was as though a new sense had been given him, and his heart beat with an intimate understanding of the heart-life of the beasts and birds and all sensitive things. He felt no longer a kindly stranger amongst them: they had become as life of his life, even as the poor had become some years before. And with this new understanding there came to him a wonderful power over all the wild life which moves upon the earth and in the air and water. The most timid or ferocious became fearless or tame at his side. Many are the stories related by those who knew Francis, of this singular power of his. For example: at Alviano, Francis was disturbed in his preaching by the swallows who were

[1] I Celano, 58; *Leg. Maj.* XII. 2-3; *Fioretti*, cap. XV.; *Actus*, cap. 16.

[2] e.g. during his fast on Lake Thrasymene two years previously, a rabbit attached himself to Francis and would hardly leave him. Cf. I Celano, 60.

building their nests and chirping and chattering the while. "My sisters, the swallows," he called to them, "it is now time for me to speak; you have been speaking enough all the time." And at once the swallows ceased their chirping until the sermon was over.[1] Once at the Porziuncola a cicala made its home in a fig-tree near Francis' cell. At Francis' call she would come and sit upon his hand. Then he would say: "Sing, my sister cicala, and praise the Lord thy Creator with a joyful song". And the cicala would at once begin to sing and continue singing until Francis joined her in song: nor would she go away until he bade her. But after eight days Francis told her to leave the place; for he would not hold the wild things even in a willing captivity. Then the cicala flew away and did not again return.[2] But most characteristic of all is the story of the wolf of Gubbio. It happened in the last years of Francis' life when he was too infirm to walk. He was on his way to Gubbio and had passed the night at the monastery of San Verecondo in the hills. Next morning he set out upon an ass; but as he was about to proceed some peasants came running to him, telling him not to go forward as the country was over-run with ravenous wolves, who would surely eat both him and the ass. Francis answered gaily: "But what harm have I done to my brothers, the wolves, that they should eat me and the ass? I will go on in the name of God." When he came to Gubbio he found the city in a panic of fear. Francis thereupon preached to the people, telling them that this trouble had come upon them because of their sins, and persuading them to live better lives if they would be friends with God and His creatures. But after the sermon he went out to seek the particular wolf who was the chief cause of the

[1] I Celano, 59; *Leg. Maj.* XII. 4. [2] II Celano, 171.

terror, and in his marvellous way he tamed the beast, and brought him into the city in meek and docile mood and had him fed: and from that time the wolf became the pet of the city until he died and, as tradition says, was buried honourably by the citizens on the spot where he had long been lodged, and where afterwards a church was built to commemorate this wonderful thing, under the title of San Francesco della Pace.[1]

But on the day when Francis first discovered his brotherhood with the birds he did not yet realize the power that had come to him. As he went along the road to Bevagna he was only conscious of a new freedom of spirit amongst God's creatures which gave him great gladness. Yet athwart the gladness there fell a shadow of remorse that he had hitherto been a stranger to all this vast creation and had failed to preach the word of God to his brothers the birds.

The journey through the valley of Spoleto and that also through the Marches of Ancona, whither Francis also went about this time, became indeed a veritable triumphal progress. The people crowded around him bringing their sick to be healed, and they were happy if they could but touch his garments; still happier if they could tear off a piece to

[1] It has long been the custom to regard the story of the wolf of Gubbio in the *Fioretti*, cap. 20, and *Actus*, cap. 23, as a mere allegory or myth. But the story has in recent years received two curious supports for its substantial authenticity. I refer to the *Passio S. Verecundi*, an almost contemporary chronicle published by Mgr. Falocci-Pulignani in *Miscell. Franc.* x. pp. 6-7. This chronicle puts it beyond doubt that Francis came to Gubbio at a time when the country was being ravaged by hungry wolves. Cf. *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. I. p. 70. As to the tradition of the wolf's lodgment and death in Gubbio as related in the text, there is the finding of a wolf's skull imbedded beneath the ancient walls of the church of San Francesco della Pace, of which a full account is given in "*Gubbio, Past and Present*," by L. McCraken (Dent), p. 283.

keep as a relic: so that he was in danger of going habitless. Even the things he handled became sacred in their eyes and were kept reverently for the relief of the sick.

At some places the clergy and townsfolk, hearing of his approach, came out to meet him; the church-bells were rung joyously and the children marched in procession clapping their hands or carrying palm-branches and singing as they went along. In the Marches of Ancona and on the borders of the Romagna the success of his preaching was especially remarkable. At Ascoli thirty men, learned clerks some of them, joined the fraternity. Even the heretical Patarini, who were strong in numbers in those parts, respected his preaching and did not oppose him, though in opposition to their doctrines he was at pains to impress upon the listening crowds the duty of obedience to the Roman Church and respect for priests.[1]

And here we may mention one trait in the apostolate of Francis which conduced not a little to the success of his mission. It mattered not to him whether he was preaching to a large crowd or merely to one or two people: he spoke as freely and fervently in one case as in the other.[2] Totally unconscious of himself, he poured out his message of penance and peace and love with a burning eloquence even if but one man were listening. The incentive to speak was not dependent on the numbers or quality of his audience but in his own wonder at and realization of the eternal mysteries and in his zeal to fulfil the commission laid upon him. He spoke because he must, and from the fullness of his heart. And it was only when this necessity of speech was upon him

[1] I Celano, 62.

[2] "*Populorum maximam multitudinem quasi vivum unum cernebat et uni quasi multitudine diligentissime praedicabat*" (I Celano, 72).

that he could speak at all. At other times, if called upon to preach, he would merely bless the people and turn away.[1] He would never speak to them as a matter of form. Nor could he prepare sermons beforehand as ordinary preachers must. On the few occasions when he attempted to deliver a carefully prepared discourse, he failed utterly: the prepared speech fettered his spirit and his mind became a blank.[2] And so when he did speak, his words were like the sudden letting loose of pent-up waters, rugged and swift in their flow, awesome in their force and in the sense they gave of the volume of life behind, and yet melodious to the ear and steadying to the soul of the listener as the flow of vast waters always is. Francis at length returned to the Porziuncola, but the call to the infidels was still in his heart, and before the winter had set in, he had again started out to fulfil his desire.[3]

This time his intention was to preach to those Moors who had been defeated so severely the previous year at Las Navas: so he took the road to Spain, intending to cross thence into Morocco. His companions included Brother Bernard da Quintavalle who had left Bologna in fear of the reverence paid him there, as we have already said. So eager was Francis to reach his goal that it was with difficulty his companions could keep up with him on the road: "he seemed like one intoxicated in spirit," says St. Bonaventure, so swiftly did he press forward. But again his adventure was to fail of its purpose. When he reached Spain the fatigue and the hard winter weather brought on a sickness, and Francis could pursue his journey no further. When he was sufficiently recovered to be able to travel, he turned his face home-

[1] I Celano, 72.
[2] *Ibid.*; cf. II Celano, 107.
[3] Cf. Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 189.

wards, convinced that his immediate duty was with the brethren in Italy.[1] But some say that on his way home, he turned aside to seek comfort for his soul at the shrine of St. James the Apostle at Compostella, and that whilst he knelt there, he received an inward assurance that this journey would not be in vain, since on his homeward travel he would find places for the establishment of the fraternity and receive many brethren into the Order.[2]

[1] I Celano, 56; *Leg. Maj.* IX. 6.

[2] Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 9; see also pp. 189-90, where various incidents concerning this journey are related. Tradition says that Francis actually founded places for the friars at Burgos, Logrono, etc., and that he predicted at Montpellier the foundation of a house of friars there. Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1213. On the other hand the Bollandists hold that all these foundations belong to a somewhat later date. Cf. *Acta SS.* mense Octob. II. p. 603.

CHAPTER VI.

FRANCIS ATTENDS THE FOURTH LATERAN COUNCIL.

From the time that Francis had made his first effort to preach to the infidels the fraternity had been rapidly increasing in numbers and activity. Before the close of 1215, the brethren were well known throughout the whole of central and northern Italy; and a beginning of the apostolate had been made in Spain and southern France.

In Italy the wonderment—in which was a curious commingling of the readiness to scoff and the impulse to worship—which had been aroused by the friars on their first appearance, had given place to a more consistent reverence. Francis and his brethren had become an accepted fact in the reform movement of the period; and throughout Umbria, Tuscany, the Marches of Ancona and Lombardy, dwelling-places of the fraternity had sprung into being as the nests appear in the trees in the early spring-time. They were small hermitages either on the outskirts of the cities and towns or in the hills not far away. For the people, won to better thoughts by the life and preaching of the brethren, were unwilling to see them depart from their neighbourhood, and the brethren—wanderers as they must be for the sake of Christ—were glad of a welcoming retreat to which they might retire amidst their labours and find refreshment for their souls in undisturbed prayer and in the companionship of each other.

The establishment of the brethren in a neighbourhood was in the best sense of the term, a social event. They became part of the life of the place. For though they accepted usually only such places as had a certain solitariness to recommend them, yet they dwelt there only at the will of the owner or of the commune. They took part in the labour of the day with the country folk or in the houses of the citizens, and depended upon them for their daily bread. They thus made themselves sons of the people even whilst they were to them apostles of a new religious life; and their presence pervaded the landscape and brought a new element as of some intimate concern, into the life of the community and into every household. That was one of the strange things about these new religious. They won their way not by deliberate dominance, whether social or intellectual, over others, but as children win their way, by very dependence. In their entire poverty and still more in their gentleness and wide human sympathies, they threw themselves upon the goodwill of their fellow-men: and this dependence proved in large measure their strength. Men grown cynical and suspicious of attempts to force religion upon them, were softened and disarmed when it came to them disrobed of every appearance of worldly interest and ambition. Moreover it was very evident that these men had not embraced poverty as a weapon of party warfare either in opposition to the Church or in its defence; but because they loved it for its own sake as one loves a precious gain. What the gain really was, or why it should be allied to such absolute poverty, might be a mystery to most of those who saw them: yet they felt it was there and was worth having in their midst. Its presence spelt for them a vision of purity and charity and noble endurance and of a joyous faith in the heaven to come. In this way did

the fraternity win the heart of the Italian people; giving to them of its own spiritual treasure, yet depending on them for all manner of human good-will.

And it was not only the laity who thus welcomed and succoured the brethren. The parish priests were as kindly and worshipful as their parishioners. Here and there a priest might rebuff them as meddlers and hypocrites;[1] but generally speaking the priests were their friends and opened their doors to them hospitably when the brethren begged a night's lodging as they went from place to place. And indeed it would have been strange had it been otherwise; for the brethren showed marked reverence for all priests and taught the people to respect them. In striking contrast to the reforming sectaries, Francis and his friars would tolerate no ill-word against a priest, since to them he was the representative and minister of the priesthood of Christ. To those who spoke ill of a priest Francis would reply, "I know not whether his living be worthy of respect or otherwise; but this I know that his hands convey the sacraments to many people and bring salvation to their souls: therefore will I kiss his hands in all reverence."[2]

Nor would he allow the brethren to preach in any parish against the will of the parish-priest,[3] or in any way to interfere with their parochial rights.[4] And so whether with the laity or the clergy, he won his way by gentleness and humility.

[1] e.g. I Celano, 46.

[2] Cf. *Admonit.* 26 in *Opuscula* [Quaracchi], p. 18. Concerning Francis' reverence for priests, cf. II Celano, 8, 146, 201; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 54; *Regula Prima*, cap. 19; *Testamentum S. F.*

[3] Cf. *Testamentum S. F.*; *Scripta Fr. Leonis* [Lemmens], n. 6; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 50.

[4] Cf. *Scripta Fr. Leonis, ut supra*; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 10.

What perhaps most recommended the brethren to the authorities of the Church was that, wherever they were received by the people, the spirit of faction and heresy was lessened: men forgot their discontent and shook off their quarrels; a new sense of life sprang up amongst them, beside which political programmes and party feuds were of little concern. Of those who had hitherto thought of reform as something to set their neighbours right, many now began to take it as something primarily concerning themselves: and that was the beginning of peace. Moreover in this new religious revival the Church was not set as a bone of contention in the midst. Francis and the brethren took the Church for granted; they did not discuss its claims. On occasion, when drawn thereto by the heretics, they would assert their belief and profess their reverence, but they did not argue. Very swiftly the people recognized that the brethren saw in the Church, above and beyond the petty contentions of men, a Divine presence amidst the things of earth: and this simple uncontentious faith did more to revive the loyalty of a people whose faith was strong in spite of discontent, than all controversy could have done. The faith of the brethren was its own argument: such was the ascendancy they obtained over the people's imagination.

Every year the brethren scattered throughout the Provinces gathered together at some appointed place,[1] about the

[1] "*Semel in anno cum multiplici lucro ad locum determinatum conveniunt*," writes Jacques de Vitry in 1216 (*vide* his letter published by M. Sabatier in *Spec. Perfect.* pp. 296 *seq.*; and by Boehmer, *Analekten zur Geschichte des Franciscus von Assisi*, p. 94 *seq.*). We know also from Celano that St. Francis from the beginning would frequently call the brethren together to consult with them about the fraternity (cf. I Celano, 29). Probably from the early days the more important annual Chapter was held at Pentecost in imitation of the gathering together of the Apostles. 3 Soc. cap. XIV. speaks of the

time of the Pentecost festival, to receive the instructions of their spiritual father and to consult with him concerning the affairs of the fraternity: thus a close union was kept between Francis and all the brethren and between the brethren themselves.

They do not seem to have met always at the Porziuncola: at least on one occasion the chapter of the brethren was held near the monastery of San Verecondo in the neighbourhood of Gubbio, and at that chapter three hundred brethren were present: for whom the Abbot provided the necessary food.[1]

To these gatherings the brethren came gladly, for the family spirit was strong amongst them. Francis took the opportunity to impress upon their minds the fundamental principles of their vocation and to warn them against the dangers they must meet with on their journeys. He would especially remind them of the reverence due to priests and to the ordinances of the Church, lest they should be led astray by the heretical reformists. They were, moreover, to avoid sitting in judgment upon men who lived delicately or were proudly clad: rather were they to revere all men as their lords and brothers. Wherever they came they must endeavour to bring peace and harmony amongst men, and this they would do if they had peace and good-will in themselves. In fine, they were to remember that their mission was "to heal the wounded, bind up the broken-hearted, and recall them that had erred". "Many may seem to us," he would add,

Chapters of Pentecost and Michaelmas; but it is uncertain whether the Michaelmas Chapter was instituted before the institution of Provinces in 1217. Père Mandonnet, O.P. (*Les Règles et la gouvernement de l'Ordo de Paenitentia*, chap. III. p. 201 note), seems to hold that both chapters were of earlier institution.

[1] *Leg. de Passione S. Verecundi*, in *Miscell. Franc.* x. p. 6. Cf. *Archiv Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. I. pp. 69-70.

"to be limbs of the devil, who nevertheless shall become disciples of Christ." Sometimes the admonitions and precepts given by Francis at these Chapters were incorporated in the Rule for their better remembrance. When the Chapter was over, the brethren again set out for their different places or went on a journey newly assigned them, with their hearts burning and their souls braced up.

These were indeed the joyous years of the fraternity's growth. Without any doubt the brethren had their own individual difficulties and temptations which developed the strength of their manhood but they were not such as make history; and so it is that apart from the incidents related in the preceding Chapter, the three or four years following the "conversion" of the Lady Clare, give comparatively sparse harvest to the historian of the early Franciscan days. History is not made in the equitable sunshine but in the frosts and tempests and scalding heat: for history is not life itself but the record of life's transitions and violent efforts.

But that was now about to happen which was to intensify still more the life of Francis and his brethren and link up still further their destiny with the religious movement of the age: though at the time they were hardly conscious of any unusual stirring in their calmly vivid lives.

In the November of 1215 Francis was again in Rome. The General Council convoked by Innocent III to meet on St. Martin's Day, was then in session. It is not improbable that Francis was present in the interest of the fraternity, for the recognition of "new orders" was one of the matters to be discussed by the Council.[1]

[1] In fact so unconscious were the friars of any special link between Francis' presence at this Council and subsequent events in his history, that the early biographers do not even mention his attendance at the Council. Fortunately we have the evidence of the Dominican author of the *Vita Fratrum* (*vide infra*, p. 181) and of Angelo Clareno (*infra*, p. 177).

The Council was in truth an assemblage of all the forces, spiritual and temporal, of the Catholic world. Archbishops and bishops and the representatives of kings and princes; heads of monasteries and universities, and proctors of every established interest in the Church and petitioners for interests yet to be established—all had come to Rome as to "the exalted citadel whence the best public opinion of the age was to send forth its decrees for the ordering of the Christian nations".[1] As the assembled prelates and representatives knew well, it was a council of war. The Pope had called them together with the acknowledged purpose of bringing the religious aspirations of the time into immediate conflict with its devastating worldliness and rising infidelity. He was willing to stake his whole policy upon an attempt to gather to his side whatever in Christendom was yet responsive to the ideal of a Church purified from the evils which were sapping the very foundations of the Christian life. He would demand from all the Catholic peoples a supreme effort to root out both heresy and the more insidious worldliness which were eating into the Church's life, and to arouse the nations from the apathy which allowed the infidels to keep possession of the most sacred sanctuaries of Christendom.

The occupation of the Holy Land by the infidels was to Innocent, as to all the religious spirits of the Middle Ages, a symbol of the disloyalty of the Christian people to Christ and the Church. The recovery of the Holy Places was a matter of honour with every honest Christian; an attestation of his faith in the Divine Redeemer Who had there lived and died.

Innocent III perhaps did not realize how far the temper of the nations had receded from the point which might have made a crusade successful; or if he did, being a mystic as

[1] Baronius, *Annales*, ad an. 1215.

well as a politician, he may yet have bound himself to issue his war-cry and shame a recreant world. Also he was not a man to be diffident of carrying through a purpose to which he had set his hand. In his masterful spirit he may have thought himself able to bring the laggard states to decisive action. But whatever may have been his further outlook upon the issue of his policy, he associated the idea of an internal reformation of Christendom with an effort to recover the Holy Places. A crusade would revive the people's faith and go hand in hand with moral reform. And for this Innocent had convoked the Council, to take its opinion and still more to issue his command.

So on St. Martin's Day, the Conciliar Fathers and delegates were assembled in the church of St. John Lateran for the opening of the first session. Innocent preached the inaugural sermon. Clearly his words rang out, and in his voice was an impassioned sincerity. For the moment the statesman in the Pontiff gave place to the prophet. It would seem that he already had some intimation that his days would not be long, and that he must not delay if he would see the consummation of the work he had taken in hand. This prescience of an early death hangs pathetically over the strenuous vitality with which he directed the Council. It dictated to him the text for his opening sermon: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer".[1] "Truly," he went on to say, "might this Council be called a pasch, for the word pasch means passage," and from this assembly he looked for a threefold passage of the nations —a passage to the Holy Places, a passage from vice to virtue, a passage from this temporal life to the life eternal. Not in temporal ambition had he called the Fathers together, but

[1] Luke xxii. 15.

that the Church might be reformed and the Holy Land be once more in Christian hands.

If God would not grant him to see the accomplishment of his desire, he would not refuse to drink this chalice of Christ's passion: he would not refuse death, though he would that he might live in the flesh until the work now to be begun, were consummated. "Not my will, but God's, be done!"

Then swiftly he depicted the misery of the Holy Places trod under foot by the infidels. "Jerusalem, the city of sorrow, is calling to all who pass by the way to come and see if there be sorrow like unto hers: and shame and disgrace will it be to them who pass by unheeding." But another sorrow called out to them from amidst the abominations which were in the midst of the Christian peoples, the sorrow of the Church defiled by the people's sin: and at this the Pontiff deftly took up and expounded the ninth chapter of the Prophet Ezechiel, applying its reforming ordinances to the situation of the moment.

He himself, as the supreme pastor of God's Church, he explained, was "the man clothed in linen with a writer's ink-horn at his loins". To him the Lord had said: "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem; and mark *Thau* upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof". His audience were "the six men that came from the way of the upper gate". To them the command of the Lord was "to go after their leader through the city and to strike," sparing none save "those upon whom they see *Thau*": they are to strike with all the power at their disposal —interdict, suspension, excommunication and deposition— till the city be cleansed. Yet must they strike in order to heal, kill in order to quicken; according to the words of our

Lord: "I will not that the sinner die". Chiefly must they look to the clerical order: and now Innocent's words, sharp and decisive as they had been, took on a keener edge: "When the priest sins, he makes the people sin too". "How can the pastors who live evilly reprehend those who live in iniquity? These will but reply: the son cannot do but what he sees his father doing; it is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his master; and so is the prophecy fulfilled: there shall be like priest like people."[1]

It was a masterly discourse, superbly courageous, entirely sincere. Its spirit dominated the deliberations of the Council and urged the Fathers to the devising of heroic measures.

A new crusade was decided upon: the Roman Curia was to be purified of secular ambition and the avarice of its officials; and the reformation of the clergy, thus begun at the fountain-head, was to be carried throughout all ranks.

So the Council ordained: but the Crusade proved a failure, and the cleansing of the Roman Court from the scanpal of avarice was thwarted by the distrust of the nations.[2] And yet the Fourth Lateran Council has justly been styled the Great Reforming Council of the Middle Ages; for though it failed of its more immediate and ambitious decisions, it adopted and uttered with the sacrosanct utterance of the highest authority, the cry of the age for a more Christian life amongst clergy and laity, and set in motion forces by which a new life was to be given to a degenerate faith and a slackened moral sense. The proclamation of a crusade received but a faint-hearted response; but the decrees ordering the bishops to appoint worthy men to preach the word of God in their dio-

[1] Labbaeus, *Sacrosanta Concilia ad Collecta* (edit. 1758), vol. XXII. pp. 968-73.

[2] Cf. Abbot Gasquet, *Henry III and the Church*, chap. v.

ceses, and still more the decisive adoption of the penitential movement and fraternities into the organized system of the Church, were the salvation of Catholic Christendom.

But it is in reference to Francis and his fraternity that we are concerned with the Council in this history. Francis had been called to Rome either by the Pope himself or by the Cardinal-Protector, John of St. Paul, to represent the interests of the fraternity. For it had been determined to direct the uprising of the new penitential fraternities into the already established ways of the monastic or canonical life,[1] so as to bring them more effectively under the authority of the Church and temper the fanaticism which not unfrequently entered into the constitution of the new fraternities. And in fact the Council did decree that no new Rules should be allowed, but all orders founded in the future must adopt one of the traditional Rules as the basis of their organization.

Happily for Francis and his fraternity, their Rule had already been approved by the Holy See, and when the question of the new orders came up for discussion, Pope Innocent notified the Council of his approbation of the Friars Minor.[2] It is evident that the Pontiff had no intention of going back upon his original approbation; for not only did he thus formally confirm his sanction of the Rule of the brethren in the

[1] The traditional religious communities were of two sorts; the monks who mostly followed the Rule of St. Benedict, and the canons-regular who followed the Rule of St. Augustine. The various congregations either of the monastic order or the canonical, differed in their constitutions and customs, but they all professed the same rule according as they were monks or canons. The Franciscan Rule, however, was *sui generis* and the Friars Minor were neither monks nor canons; they represented the new penitential fraternity pure and simple.

[2] Cf. Angelo Clareno in Ehrle, *Archiv für Litteratur und Kirchen-Geschichte*, tom. I. p. 557.

presence of the representatives of the Church; but about this same time he extended the "privilege" of absolute poverty, as accorded to the brethren, to Clare and her sisters at San Damiano.[1]

Such formal approbation was undoubtedly of the first importance to the life of the fraternity in that it preserved the individuality of the Franciscan family at a critical moment: but it did not add anything to the life of the brethren itself nor tend to expand its vital energies. And yet, as we have said, this Council was to stir deeply the heart of Francis and leave its mark upon the fraternity.

It came about in this way: all unconsciously on the part of the Pontiff and the Council and without deliberation on the part of Francis—as in fact the most vital happenings occur.

Francis had come to the Council as one might approach a holy place, expectant of the majesty of God. To him this assembling of the bishops of Christendom was as another Pentecost: for truly he believed that where the Church was thus assembled there would be the Divine Spirit; and as he entered the great cathedral church of the Catholic world on that first day of the Council, this sense of the opening heavens was upon him. So he had awaited the sermon of the Supreme Pontiff. One needs the reverential spirit to receive a prophet's words; and of all that vast assembly, none was so reverent as the lowly friar in his unkempt garb. To him the sermon was as a personal message; had he not already known that the judgment of God was hovering over a forgetful world, held back only by God's own mercy? And now the Pontiff speaking as God's representative on earth was announcing judgment and extending mercy. Eagerly he seized upon

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 171.

that promise of mercy in the judgment to come, to all who were signed with the *Thau*, the mark of penance and the new life in Christ. With that mark he would sign himself and the brethren and all who would listen to his words. And the *Thau* seemed, as the Pontiff explained its meaning, the ordained mark of the sons of Poverty. "*Thau*," the Pope said, "is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet" (Francis treasured those words as indicating the humility in which the Gospel was founded), "it expresses the form of the cross such as it was before Pontius Pilate placed the title upon it. This sign he carries on his forehead who shows forth the power of the cross in his deeds according to what the Apostle says: they have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences; and again: God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world. Such a man indeed weeps and groans over the abominations which are in the midst of the city, since the sins of one's neighbour are the hell of the just."

Every word fell upon the ears of Francis as an echo of the spirit which had led him on these nine years past; yet with a fresh emphasis and as words of a full and immediate wisdom which gave direction and force to latent energies. From that moment he took to himself the sign *Thau* as the symbol of the vocation of the brethren. It became his sign-manual: with it he marked his dwelling-places and subscribed his letters[1] as with a saving talisman.

But chiefly did he bear the *Thau* in his very soul: for now he began to mourn even more passionately than heretofore over the world's sin and to feel a greater pity for the world upon which God's judgment must surely fall if it did

[1] Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 3; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 9.

not repent. And from that time too he began to ponder upon some means of bringing the Divine pardon more swiftly to repentant souls. Never before perhaps had he realized so deeply and with such entire conviction the message which Sister Clare and Brother Sylvester had sent him two years ago, that God had called him not for his own salvation only but also for the salvation of others.

Of a surety now he felt that the brethren were "the heralds of the great King" sent to carry out the Pontiff's commission of judgment and mercy, but chiefly of mercy: for as Pope Innocent had declared in the summing up of his sermon: "God desires not the death of the sinner".[1]

Men whose lives are a faithful aspiration after some moral or spiritual ideal, not infrequently experience these sudden deepenings of their most cherished convictions, wrought by some unexpected word or action: and these experiences bring with them a new illumination and assurance and a keener urgency to realize the cherished life which is in them. In

[1] I do not know if anyone has hitherto connected St. Francis' devotion to the sign *Thau* with Pope Innocent's sermon: but to my mind the connexion seems certain. There is no historic evidence of the use of the *Thau* until after the Council; but we know Francis used it not long afterwards; and we may be quite sure that that devotion had its origin in some external event, as all Francis' devotions had. Then there are the two visions of Brother Pacificus. In the first vision which happened *before* the Council, in 1213 or 1214, he saw Francis marked with two flaming swords in the form of a cross, i.e. a four-limbed cross (II Celano, 106; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 9); another time, but *after* the Council, "before he became Minister of France," Pacificus saw him with the *Thau* on his forehead (*ibid.*).

One can hardly read the inaugural sermon of Innocent III without being struck by its intense sympathy with the penitential spirit which gave rise to the penitent fraternities of the time. It was such a sermon as Francis could not have listened to without feeling that the Pontiff in his magisterial capacity, was proclaiming the gospel of penance such as he himself and the penitents had been preaching. And it was the Pontiff who proclaimed the *Thau* as the badge of the penitent spirit.

the beginning of their spiritual growth such urgency is commonly supplied by the discovery of hitherto unrecognized objects of reverence or affection; but later it proceeds not so much from new ideas or mental recognitions, but rather from the will or affective faculty itself. A chance word perhaps will reveal to the heart its own possession not in a new light but with a fuller, more translucent light: and upon such revelations does a man's life bound to its final perfections.

In some way Francis must have had the feeling of being adopted into the declared policy of the assembled Church, as he listened to Innocent's injunctions to the Council: for undoubtedly in so far as they referred to the cleansing of Christian society from internal vice and luxury, they were the official response to the penitential movement by the supreme Pastor of Christendom. All unconscious of it as he was, Francis was in fact in the eyes of the Pontiff, the representative of that movement in its purest form. Another man there was present at the Council, who was to turn that movement into a defence of the dogmatic position of the Church; and that was Dominic Guzman who had come to petition the Pope for leave to found a new order of Preachers. But Dominic's purpose was directly to defend the faith of Christendom against the argumentative attacks of the heretics; whereas the purpose of Francis was that primary aim of the penitent upheaval, the more perfect practice of the Gospel-life. How far, one wonders, was Pope Innocent conscious that in these two men would be found the driving force which was to realize the prophetic mission of purgation which he had set before the Council? And did their presence give inspiration to his thought when he met the Conciliar Fathers at the Lateran? One would not lightly hazard

an affirmation, knowing how seldom forceful minds, like that of Pope Innocent, are conscious of their dependence upon the actions of others. And yet, such was the greatness of his nature, whether or not he foresaw their future destiny, he could not let them pass by, but must gather them into the armoury of the Church. But this formal adoption of the Franciscan fraternity into the forces of the hierarchy will necessarily bring about wide-reaching results in its constitution and development: it will become more intimately associated with the general forward policy of the Church: a secluded growth will no longer be possible; its individuality must find its setting in the common life and system of the Catholic hierarchy, of which it now becomes a more intimate member. And of this too you may be sure, that the two fraternities of Francis and Dominic having thus formally been adopted by the Church, the orthodox penitential movement will gradually find itself entirely drawn within their enfolding organizations: and the fraternities will grow not merely from the vital force within them but by the shepherding care of vigilant authority: and that too will affect their ultimate history.

But as yet these further consequences are hidden from the common gaze, in the veils of time; and they do not detain the thoughts of Francis whose one purpose is to carry out his mission as it comes to him. Yet even so, he was conscious of an enlargement of the horizon which bounded the limits of his activity. He was brought for the first time into definite alliance with the larger policy of the Church and with other forces which were working for the regeneration of Catholic Christendom. Thus before the Council was over he had entered into comradeship with Dominic Guzman of whom we have just spoken.

Their first coming together in friendship is one of the romances of history. Neither knew the other till they came face to face on one of these busy days in the streets of Rome. Doubtless on his journey through Italy, Dominic had heard of the Friars Minor and had been curious as to their founder, of whose doings men were now talking with wonderment. One night during his stay in the Eternal City, Dominic in a dream saw himself and a man he did not know, presented by the Blessed Virgin to Jesus Christ, as the destined messengers of divine mercy to the world. The next day, coming across Francis, he recognized in him the man of his dream and went forward and claimed acquaintance and told the dream he had had. Then embracing Francis, he exclaimed: "You are my comrade and we will run together. Let us stand together and no enemy shall overcome us." [1]

Dominic Guzman was at this time about forty-five years of age, that is to say, he was Francis' senior by about eleven years. Whilst Francis was still dreaming about a soldier's life and leading the revels in his native city, Dominic had already been preaching against the heretics in the South of France. He had no gay past to trouble his conscience. From childhood he had been of a religious cast of thought, and had early been sent to school under some Canons Regular.

He had a clear logical mind: in after years he would expound the Epistles of St. Paul in the household of the Pope, during his visits to Rome, like any master in the schools. Even in his student days he was austere and ascetic in his personal conduct, and for years would not taste wine. But withal he was pitiful towards others who were in need. Once during a famine he sold his books to feed the poor; at another time he offered to exchange places with a captive

[1] See note on p. 222.

who had fallen into the hands of the Moors, because the captive had a family dependent upon him.

His future career was determined by his friendship with Diego, Bishop of Osima. The bishop took Dominic with him on a visit to Rome in 1205. Pope Innocent was just then sending three legates and twelve Cistercian abbots to preach in Languedoc where the Albigensian heresy was making portentous headway; and he now attached the Bishop of Osima and his friend to the mission.

On one occasion a conference had been arranged between the bishop and Dominic on the one side and the heretics on the other. The bishop meant to go in great pomp, thinking to over-awe his opponents, but Dominic persuaded him to put aside the paraphernalia of his rank and to appear at the conference barefooted and armed only with the meekness and humility of the Gospel.[1]

In 1206 the Cistercian abbots left the field to go to the General Chapter of their Order at Citeaux: in truth their mission had not been a great success. Dominic and his bishop were left to carry on the work of defence; then two years later the bishop died and Dominic became virtually the leader of the Catholic propaganda. He showed again of what temper he was when in 1209 he refused to take part in the crusade against the Albigenses and confined himself to his own proper work of preaching. He believed that heresy would not be uprooted by secular arms, but by the word of God expounded by men whose lives witnessed to their own belief.

By 1215 Dominic had gathered around him some priests of a like mind to his own; and had received from Fulk, Bishop of Toulouse, leave to form them into a company of preachers; and then he came to Rome to seek the Papal

[1] *Vitæ Fratrum*, loc. cit. pars 2, pp. 67-8.

sanction for his new order of Preachers. At first Innocent had hesitated to give a formal sanction. He still favoured the idea of renovating the established monastic orders with the apostolic spirit rather than of founding new orders. But when the Council was over, he bade Dominic return to Toulouse and with the advice of his companions draw up a Constitution for his fraternity, based, however, upon the Rule of St. Augustine in accordance with the decree of the Council regarding new orders.[1]

Some hard words have been uttered by a latter-day world about the founder of the Friars Preachers: he has been described as a stern inquisitor, more zealous for a theological system than for the souls of men: yet they who have thus described him, can hardly have read the records of his life. He was indeed first and last the defender of the Catholic Faith against an encroaching heresy: and this mission of defence was his life and the mould of his character; he lived for that one purpose. One might call him a man of ideas rather than an idealist: and that would account perhaps for the fact that in after years Dominic was remembered not for his personality but for the work he achieved as founder of an order.[2] We have indeed no well-defined portrait of the man: but such glimpses of him as we obtain of him from the chroniclers, show him to have been a conscientious, zealous worker for the Faith, with a clearer vision of what was needful for the overcoming of heresy than most men of his day, and with a forceful will capable of achieving a purpose he had set himself to achieve. He perceived the futility of combating heresy with the sword whilst the mind was left uninstructed and unconvinced; and he saw too that no intellectual

[1] Cf. *Acta SS.* Augusti, tom. I. p. 358 *seq.*
[2] Cf. P. Sabatier, *Vie de S. François*, p. 248.

argument would avail unless the preacher manifested in his own life the Gospel he preached. And so out of his experience and his own sincerity he conceived of an order of militant penitents who would make war upon heresy with the two weapons of theological learning and an ascetic life.

A very different character, you will see at once, from Francis. It was the meeting of the experimental man of affairs with the idealist. And yet between these two there was the bond of a common loyalty wholly separated from any personal ambition or self-interest. Both were heart and soul dedicated to the service of Christ without any ulterior motive, and both had before their minds the reign of the Christ amongst men as their single objective. In that common loyalty their friendship was established. They met in the simplicity of their purpose, and knew each other for what they were; nor could they ever again be strangers to each other, however far apart their separate vocations might lead them. Dominic indeed at one time would gladly have united the two fraternities under one rule and leadership: so great was his reverence for Francis. But that was not to be. Each had his own part to play in the drama of life: neither could have fulfilled the special purpose for which the other was designed. Yet their friendship has rightly been crowned by tradition as a noble companionship in arms: for upon the minds of their contemporaries they left the conviction of a sacred emulation in which each strove to accomplish his separate work for the same Divine Master, with a true reverence and regard for each other. How often they met after that first meeting in Rome, we cannot say: probably not frequently. But the one authentic reunion related in the legends bears out the verdict of history. The two leaders

had met in conference with Cardinal Ugolino, and both had been of the same mind that their fraternities would serve the Church better in their proper condition of evangelical humility, than if they were to assume rank and position in the hierarchy: for the cardinal had wished to take the future bishops from their ranks; and to that neither of the founders would agree. When the conference was over and the two friars were leaving the cardinal's house, Dominic turned to Francis and begged of him his cord that he might wear it in remembrance. Francis consented, though somewhat reluctantly because of the undisguised reverence which prompted the request. But Dominic receiving the cord, at once girded himself with it. Then the two spontaneously clasped each other's hands, and thus for awhile held converse. "Brother Francis," said Dominic at length, "I would that your order and mine were one and that we might live in the Church under the same rule." When finally they parted and took their different roads, Dominic said to those who were with him: "In truth I tell you, that all religious should imitate this holy man Francis, so perfect is his holiness".[1]

Three centuries later Andrea della Robbia made that clasping of hands of the two founders, the subject of one of

[1] II Celano, 150; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 43. It is impossible to fix precisely the date of this meeting. It must have been after Cardinal Ugolino first made the acquaintance of Francis at Florence in 1217. Dominic was in Rome (where this meeting took place) in the winter of 1217, also in 1218 and again in December, 1220, and in the earlier months of 1221 (*Acta SS.* loc. cit. *Comment. Praev.*). The probable date, however, is the winter of 1217-18. We know that Cardinal Ugolino was in Rome at that time. Cf. Potthast, nos. 5629 *seq.* A meeting between Francis and Dominic in 1216 is mentioned in *Umbria Serafica, Miscell. Franc.* II. p. 47; and by Galvagno de la Flamma in *Mon. Ord. FF. PP.* vol. II. fasc. I. p. 7. Concerning the meeting of the two saints at the Chapter of Mats in 1219, *vide Acta SS.* loc. cit.

his immortal terra-cottas; but as one gazes upon it, remembering the life-stories of the two men, one's thoughts are carried beyond the personal incident, and Francis and Dominic are types of two spirits usually found amongst men in active opposition—the spirits of liberty and law.

The very breath of Francis' life was the liberty of soul which he found in the service of Christ: the beauty of the Gospel, as he saw it, was the spiritual freedom it gave as an inheritance to its faithful observers;[1] and it was that freedom he hungered for and sought in all his ardent adventure. Dominic on the other hand was restless for the law which the Church had received from Christ: he was zealous for its ordered dogmas of faith and for the established authority without which the faith could not stand. Only the fanatic will deny that both spirits are of the very essence of life itself, whether it be found in religion or elsewhere, and therefore at all times in potential harmony. Yet it is only in the more exalted natures that this harmony is realized. With lesser men differences of function can be thought of only as a contradiction of principles; and the potential harmony is buried in actual honest discord.

In after times something of this discord actually showed itself in the relations between the disciples of Dominic and those of Francis; though the greater spirits amongst them ever remembered the founders' friendship and were true to it.[2] Historians of a certain type have made the most of those open antagonisms: though they were such as one

[1] See the discourse of St. Francis on the virtues of Poverty in *Fioretti*, cap. 12; *Actus*, cap. 13.

[2] Thus Thomas of Celano, after referring to the dissensions between the two fraternities, pleads for the wider charity of the founders—II Celano, 149. In 1255 John of Parma and Humbert de Romanis, the two Superiors-General,

might look for in dealing with the story of men. But what was of more serious moment was, not the pointed disputes which generally ended in further protestations of friendship, but the more or less unconscious spirit of rivalry, under which the names of religion often cloaked purely secular ambitions: as when Brother Elias divided the Franciscan Order into seventy-two provinces, professedly in honour of the seventy-two disciples of the Gospel, but really to gain a tactical advantage over the Dominicans, who had formed their order into twelve provinces in honour of the Apostles.[1]

These things did harm to the fraternities and might have been avoided. But further there was the inevitable influence which two bodies of men, brought into frequent alliance with each other and both standing near to the supreme authority in the Church, were bound to exercise upon each other's development. This is not the place to discuss the points of detail in which either fraternity borrowed from the other in organization and mental outlook. Some say that Dominic borrowed from Francis the rule of mendicancy which he imposed on his brethren; it seems certain that the example of the Dominicans led to the first formation of theological studies amongst the Friars Minor. Here, however, we only refer to these matters, which belong to the later history of Francis and his fraternity, as showing how events which happened during the Lateran Council, were the seeds of much

issued a joint pastoral ordering the friars of the two orders to maintain peace and concord. Many instances might be cited from the chronicles of the time, showing the fraternal regard of the two fraternities for each other, side by side with instances of dissension: e.g. Eccleston relates not only the dispute of the two orders regarding novices (coll. XI.V ed. Little, p. 101-2) but also how on their arrival in London the Friars Minor were lodged by the Dominicans "as members of the family" (coll. II. pp. 11, 12).

[1] Eccleston, ed. Little, coll. IX. p. 54.

that occurred in the further unfolding of Franciscan story. The destiny of the fraternity was being shaped, not merely by the inspiration of Francis, but by its alliance with the world-forces upon which the Catholic world was being carried forward in the hot rush of a fully awakened life.

[1] *Vitæ Fratrum* in *Monumenta Ord. FF. PP.* vol. I. pars 1, p. 10. It has been contended that the meeting of Francis and Dominic here mentioned must have taken place in 1216, not 1215, since the author of *Vitæ Fratrum* says that St. Dominic had come to Rome *pro ordinis confirmacione*. It is true that the Dominican Order was actually confirmed by Honorius III in 1216; but Dominic went to Rome in 1215 to seek the confirmation of his Order by Innocent III. The confirmation was delayed owing to the new decree of the Council referred to later in the text. (Note for p. 215.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE PORZIUNCOLA INDULGENCE.

When Francis again turned his steps towards Umbria, it was with a vast pity for the world upon which the judgment of the Church was to fall. That passion for souls which had been with him since his first call to the apostolate, had become a throbbing pain. From all his preaching tours he had come back to the Porziuncola, more solicitous to save the sinner and to bring all the earth to a knowledge of the joy to be had in the service of Christ. He found it hard to believe that the greatest sinner would not repent bitterly of his wrong-doing and become a true follower of the Gospel, did he but know the beauty of the law of Christ and his own loss in ignoring it.[1] And how he yearned to see the whole earth bound in fealty and comradeship with the Incarnate God, and the unnatural divorce ended which kept them apart!

More and more as the years went on, the image of the Divine Master to whom he had given his worship, came to diffuse itself through all his vision. Nothing met his eye but what in some direct way carried his thoughts to his Lord: a lamb being led to the market made him think of Jesus Christ in the hands of His executioners; in the leper he saw Him marked with the guilt which was not His own; every babe

[1] Cf. II Celano, 133.

took him in spirit to Bethlehem; the worm crawling on the ground spoke to him of his Lord's humiliation; flowers with their sweetness of colour and scent, reminded him of the sweetness of the life with Christ; a burning lamp, of the heavenly Light which came to men: Christ the Rock, the sure foundation of the Christian's hope, stood before him in mind whenever he came to a rocky ground.[1]

And these things of earth were not mere arbitrary symbols of Him he loved. In them he felt that the Christ-life was really adumbrated and in some sense lived, as the artist's life in the work of his hands. All suffering, he believed, was in a mysterious fashion allied with the suffering of Christ; all rightful joy, with His joy; all life with His life.

A theologian might explain this by saying that all created things are made after the image of the Eternal Word of God which Christ is in His Divinity; and that in His Humanity Christ adopted the created life into His own greater inheritance. But Francis was not a theologian: he uttered his beliefs as they inspired him, without inquiring for logical expositions; and most frequently the utterance was not in words but in a mental attitude or the heart's emotion. But did you ask him why he delighted in earth and sky, he would tell you, because they revealed to him the Creator who made them;[2] did you ask why he reverenced the poor man begging by the wayside, he would say: "O Brother, when you see a poor man you have set before you a mirror of the Lord and His poor mother". Or as regarding the sick: "In the sick you see the infirmities which He took upon Himself for our sake".[3] But he could never serve the poor or sick without

[1] Cf. I Celano, 77-81; II Celano, 165; *Spec. Perfect.* 116-18.
[2] I Celano, 80 *seq.* [3] II Celano, 85.

feeling that he was serving his Lord in their persons: in their service he sought His Master.[1]

This same worshipful tenderness showed itself in other ways. He would never allow the brethren to uproot a tree or to cut it down in such wise that it could not grow again; nor would he allow them so to enclose a garden that the flowers and growing things, could not spread out in their natural freedom. He would take up the worms and slow moving insects from the road where they might be crushed under foot and put them in safety. In a hard frost he was known to put sweet wine and honey near the bees that they might not die of hunger.[2] All life to him was sacred, because it came from the Hand of God.

His boundless pity for the sinner was fed by this same reverence. For no matter how sinful a man might be, he was of the flesh and blood and humanity which Christ had fashioned and taken to Himself. His very jealousy for the sovereignty of the Redeemer made him wistful for the salvation of the redeemed. He could not honour his Divine Lord and yet not honour the latent Christ-life he saw in his Lord's possible disciples: and beyond the guiltiness of the sinner he always saw that nobility: whence came in part his unconquerable hopefulness in dealing with the wrong-doer. And to this faith of his were due many miracles of unlikely conversions. Men accustomed to be judged solely by the evil they had done and holding themselves, despairingly or cynically, damned by such judgment, were subdued by this new standard of judgment. Incredulously at first they would listen to an appeal which assumed that they were not wholly evil but capable of much good. They were softened and grew shy when this saint, as they held him, took for granted

[1] *Ibid.*, 90. [2] *Ibid.*, 165.

the better nature in which they themselves hardly ventured to believe: until gradually they began to believe in his belief, and that for some was the beginning of a life of heroic endeavour to become what Francis bade them become: as happened with a band of robbers at Monte Casale in the mountains behind Borgo San Sepolcro. For some of the brethren who lived in a hermitage there, were ruthless in their opinion of the robbers and regarded them as wholly lost to all grace. But Francis would not have it so. He told the brethren to invite the robbers to the hermitage and first satisfy their hunger with good bread and wine; and when they were no longer hungry, to speak to them of the love of God. Finding that the robbers were not at once converted, he bade the brethren invite them again but to a more sumptuous banquet of eggs and cheese; and then again to set before the robbers the advantages of a good life and to appeal to them to do penance and live honestly. The robbers were won by the brotherliness of the appeal, and began to bring firewood from the woods for the brethren's use in return for the food they received at the hermitage. Finally they all vowed to live honestly by the labour of their hands for the future, and three of them asked to be admitted to the fraternity and were gladly welcomed by Francis; and in the end these became most saintly men.[1] Indeed not a few of the brethren had thus been won over from utter worldliness or sinfulness, by the tenderness born of his reverence with which Francis dealt with them at the outstart.

But if his faith in the latent goodness of human nature, worked miracles of conversion, it also accounted much for the sorrow with which the world's sin at times overwhelmed him. Had his vision of the latent godliness which is in man, been less

[1] *Spec. Perfect*, cap. 66; *Fioretti*, cap. 25; *Actus*, cap. 29.

constant and clear, he would have grieved less over the sinner: sin would have been less of an outrage upon God's creating and redeeming love; less of a loss to man. As it was, the sorrow of Christ had come upon him and was to work his martyrdom in the end.

And now we must relate how this pity for his fellow-men led Francis to seek from the Pope an amazing privilege, as it was thought in those days, namely the great indulgence of the Porziuncola. The incident has this curious feature attached to it, that for half a century after the death of Francis this indulgence, which was eventually to rank the Porziuncola as one of the four chief shrines of Christendom, was fenced about with a singular silence on the part of the official biographers of the saint and is not mentioned by any chronicler of the time. And for that reason some have denied that it is authentically a part of Francis' story. Yet though the first written witness to the indulgence was made some sixty years after the favour was granted—but, be it remembered, within the memory of Francis' contemporaries; and though even that same written witness has given legitimate grounds for discussion as to its reliability—nevertheless for reasons which will be given elsewhere in this book,[1] I for my part hold that the story as here given is authentic, and moreover I will suggest how that indulgence came to be asked for, and why for so many years it was guarded with silence.

And first, for the authentic story. One night in the summer of 1216,[2] Francis rose from his bed, whilst yet the

[1] *Vide* Appendix II, p. 477 *seq.*

[2] The date of the incident is fixed by the attestation of Benedict of Arezzo that Pope Honorius III was at Perugia when Francis obtained the indulgence. But Honorius was at Perugia certainly from the date of his election, 18 July until the winter of 1216. Nor is there any indication of his being again there during his pontificate, though Wadding asserts that he passed through Perugia

other brothers were sleeping, and went into the chapel of the Porziuncola to pray, and as he prayed the Divine Presence manifested itself to him, and in vision he beheld Jesus Christ Who bade him go to the Pope and ask that whosoever should visit the church of the Porziuncola, being truly contrite of heart and having already confessed his sins, should receive a plenary indulgence, that is, be freed from all temporal punishment due to sin.[1] Francis in his wonted fashion made no delay in fulfilling the Divine Will, but at early dawn called Brother Masseo and with him set out for Perugia to seek the Sovereign Pontiff. Now, whether this journey was undertaken before the death of Innocent III we cannot say. But Francis was present when Innocent died at Perugia on 16 July, and he was one of the few who remained by the side of the Pontiff in his last moments, when most of the attendants fled away in terror of disease and death.[2]

In any case, however, it was to Pope Honorius III that Francis actually made his petition. Honorius, who was elected two days after Innocent's death, was a man of an unworldly mind and simple habits, careless about wealth and generous to the poor. "Holy Father," said Francis, coming into the Papal presence, "but a little while past I restored for you[3] a church in honour of the Virgin Mother of Christ,

on his way to Bologna in October, 1221. But Wadding's evidence at this point is self-contradictory, since he says Francis was accompanied by Peter Cathanii, who in fact died in the preceding March.

[1] The reader not acquainted with Catholic teaching must understand that an "indulgence" does not mean a pardon of the *guilt* of sin but a release from the temporal punishment which still remains due as an expiation even after the guilt is forgiven. No "indulgence" can be gained until after the guilt has been wiped out by true contrition.

[2] Eccleston [ed. Little], col. xv. p. 119.

[3] The phrase "I restored for you" is curious. It may mean that Francis would not claim any rights whatever in the church he had restored: it be-

and I beseech your holiness that you bestow upon it an indulgence without any oblation." The Pope replied that an indulgence without an oblation attached to it, could not well be granted, since it was fitting that those who sought such a favour, should make some sacrifice and put forth a helping hand to gain it. Yet he would know for how many years Francis desired the indulgence to be granted—whether it was to continue for one year or three years or seven; also, how much of an indulgence he sought. Francis pleaded: "Holy Father, may it please your holiness to grant not years but souls". Something in the heart of the unworldly Pontiff bade him ask: "How would you have souls?" Francis made reply: "If it please your holiness, I would that whosoever should come to this church, confessed and contrite and absolved by a priest, should be freed from all guilt and penalty both in heaven and on earth, from the day of their baptism till the hour of their entry into this church". "It is much that you ask," said the Pope, "and it is not the custom of the Roman Church to grant such an indulgence." "My lord," came the instant reply, "what I ask is not from myself but from Him Who sent me, the Lord Jesus Christ." Honorius, as we have said, was an unworldly man: and so Francis' simple faith won the day against the dictates of official prudence. "It is my will that you have what you seek," said the Pontiff: and he repeated the words twice over. But at this some cardinals, who were present, intervened. The grant of such an indulgence would make the indulgences of the Crusades, and of the Tombs of the Apostles, valueless in

longed to the Church inasmuch as it was dedicated to divine service, and to the Benedictines as trustees for the Church. Or the words may refer to the coming consecration of the church, which would make it in a special sense the property of the Church.

the eyes of the people, and they urged the Pope to recall his words. But Honorius would not go back on his word: only in deference to the cardinals he would restrict the indulgence to one day in the year, namely the dedication day of the Church: for it was now determined that the church should be rightly consecrated and the consecration was fixed for the day following the feast of St. Peter's Chains.[1] Francis pleaded that the indulgence should continue at least during the octave of the festival: but to this the Pope would not consent: what he had already granted was in the face of the opposition of his counsellors; he would not grant more. Francis bowed to this decision and was turning away to leave the papal presence, when the Pope called to him: "Simpleton that you are, where are you going? what have you to show that this indulgence has been granted you?" "Holy Father," replied Francis, "your word is sufficient for me. If this is the work of God it is for Him to make His work manifest. I desire no other document: but the Blessed Virgin Mary shall be the charter and Christ the notary; and the angels shall be the witnesses."

So saying, he withdrew and at once took his way back to Assisi. But his spirit was troubled nevertheless at finding himself a centre of contention amongst the rulers of the Church. He had gone to the Pope, thinking only of the harvest of poor souls which this indulgence would reap. He had not thought, in his simplicity, that any contention

[1] It is uncertain whether the consecration of the chapel had been already determined upon before Francis came to Perugia or whether it was now determined upon in consequence of the grant of the indulgence. The feast of St. Peter's Chains is on 1 August. The consecration, therefore, was to take place on 2 August. According to Blessed Francis of Fabriano, the consecration actually took place on 2 August, 1216 (Bartholi, *Tract de Indulg.* ed. Sabatier, p. lxix).

could arise concerning it: and now the cardinals were in protest and the Pope himself was evidently timorous of his own act. By noon he and Masseo reached the leper hospital about midway between Perugia and Assisi; and here they sought food and rest. Fatigued with the hot journey, Francis fell asleep. When he awoke he spent some little time in prayer; and then he called Brother Masseo and said to him: "Brother Masseo, I tell thee on the part of God that the indulgence which has been granted me by the Sovereign Pontiff, has been confirmed in heaven": and with that assurance in his soul, Francis went forward again, all content.

The consecration of the little church was duly made, seven bishops taking part in the ceremony. Francis preached from a wooden pulpit erected outside the church, and announced the indulgence. "I want to send you all to Paradise," he said, "and I announce to you an indulgence I have received from the lips of the Sovereign Pontiff. And all you who have come here to-day and all who shall come each year on this day, with a good and contrite heart, shall have an indulgence of all their sins. I wanted it for eight days but I could not get it." [1] But beyond this announcement Francis took no further heed to make the indulgence generally known. He had cast it upon the world in obedience to the Divine command: for the rest he left it in God's Hands to manifest His work as He willed. In time the opposition of the cardinals would die away: meanwhile the brethren must avoid any appearance of strife with the pastors of the Church:

[1] Cf. Pet. Zalfani's witness in Bartholi, op. cit. p. 54. Zalfani was present at the consecration. He was a patrician of Assisi and supported the Pope in the struggle with Frederick II, and assisted at the canonization of St. Stanislaus in 1253 in the basilica of San Francesco. Cf. *Miscell. Franc.* vol. x. p. 75.

more surely would the good-will of the clergy be won by meekness and more good accrue to the souls of men.[1] And so he bade the brethren not to preach this indulgence to the world yet awhile but to wait upon the Will of God.[2]

It was many years before the brethren ventured to proclaim the indulgence far and wide, but in Umbria the story was told by those who had been present at the consecration of the little church ; and amongst their friends the brethren did not conceal a privilege which crowned with a new sanctity the place already so holy in their eyes. The pilgrims visiting the Church on the annual festival day of its dedication confessed their sins and within its walls prayed for that fuller pardon which Francis had obtained for them.

During the half-century that followed the granting of the indulgence it seemed as though the time for its wider promulgation would never come. The Pope and the cardinals were making every effort to induce the Christian nations to carry out the crusade, and chief amongst the inducements were the indulgences attached to the taking of the Cross and to the fitting out of the crusading army in the case of those who could not take part in the crusade themselves. The time was inopportune for the proclaiming of any new indulgence which might attract the attention of the people away from the urgent necessities of the Holy Land. And then, too, amongst the brethren who came after Francis, there were some who would readily have sided with the protesting cardinals and clergy in this matter. For during this period of which we are speaking, the Friars Minor together with

[1] Cf. II Celano, 146: "*Scitote, inquit, fratres, animarum fructum Deo gratissimum esse meliusque illum consequi posse pace, quam discordia clericorum*".

[2] *Vide* attestation of Giacomo Coppoli in Bartholi, op. cit. p. 52.

the Friars Preachers, were the accredited agents of the Holy See in fostering the crusade and collecting the funds for it.[1]

Thus it happened that Francis' dream of a great pardon for all contrite sinners, was for many years unfulfilled save for the pilgrims who visited the Porziuncola from the near neighbourhood. But in spite of the discretion of the brethren the annual pilgrimage survived and grew in numbers. Before the end of the century, crowds from all parts of Italy flocked every year on the dedication-festival to the Porziuncola in the hope of pardon : nor has the flow of pilgrims ceased in all the centuries since. And not only from Italy have the pilgrims come; but from all nations of the Christian world. Surely in this matter Francis' faith and meekness have been abundantly justified.

Now let me tell you how it was, as I think, that Francis came to ask for this indulgence. It was in truth the immediate outcome of that vast pity for the world in which his spirit had been steeped at the time of the General Council. He had gone forth from the Council with the Pope's proclamation of judgment and mercy sounding in his ears and vibrating in his heart. He had taken to himself that symbol of the renewed life in Christ, the *Thau*, with which he would mark, if men were willing, all the earth. And yet his mission would be in some way incomplete unless he could bring to those who received the *Thau*, that full pardon from penalty and guilt which the Pontiff had solemnly granted to those who took part in the crusade either personally or by proxy.[2]

[1] "*Ex iis qui religionem sanctorum Dominici et Francisci professi erant plurimos* [Gregorius] *emisit qui per totam Europam Christianos ad bellum Saracenis inferendum ad hortarentur*" (*Vita Gregorii IX* in *Conciliorum* [Parisiis, 1644], tom. XXVIII. p. 273.) The friars "Pardoners" became a feature of the ecclesiastical system under Gregory IX and his successors.

[2] Labbæus, tom. XXII. pp. 955-60.

For many could never avail themselves of the proffered pardon. Francis found himself yearning for a more generous extension of the indulgence. True, one might gain it not only by going oneself on the crusade but by giving an alms in its support. But there were the poor who had no alms to give. And somehow that condition of alms—meaning money-offerings—right as it was in itself, placed the indulgence outside the domain of that poverty which Christ Himself loved. To exclude the poor from a full share in the mercy of the Church in this time of judgment, seemed an injury to the poor Christ. And then it was that Francis saw in the church of the Porziuncola which Christ and His blessed Mother had given to the Lady Poverty as her own sanctuary, the fitting shrine for this extended favour.

That little church had become to him in very truth another holy place: was it not beckoning forward that spiritual crusade for which the Pontiff pleaded as a condition of the release of the Holy Land? And was it not the nursing-mother of that new life which the brethren were to spread through the world? The intensity of the thought kept him much at the Porziuncola during these days;[1] it knit his soul in a closer mystic communing with this place of his love; it was the subject of his prayer. And then came the vision and response to his prayer and his appeal to the Pope.

[1] Papini says St. Francis evangelized Terra di Lavoro, the Abruzzi and Apulia before returning to Assisi. But if Mgr. Faloci Pulignani and Mr. Montgomery Carmichael are right in their judgment (and I see no reason to doubt it) Francis about this time repaired the church of Sta. Maria Maggiore in Assisi. Cf. *Miscell. Franc.* vol. II. pp. 33-7; *Franciscan Annals*, February, 1906.

THE COUNTRY BEHIND ASSISI

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

A NEW PHASE OPENS IN THE LIFE OF THE FRATERNITY.

The reader who has attentively followed the course of this history, must have felt that sooner or later the time would come when the simple faith of the brethren in the ruling of Francis would be put to the test. Scattered throughout many provinces and brought frequently into contact with all conditions of men and the actual facts of the world, they will hardly in the ordinary way of things remain secluded in their exalted idealism and simplicity.

For one thing the life of Friar Minor touched the world at too many points, to remain untouched by it.

The vocation of the fraternity was not merely a negation or judgment of the world's life; not even mainly so. It stood indeed in direct contradiction with the actual world on many matters of vital interest, as in its renunciation of property and its policy of peace; but the fraternity itself was borne in its birth and progress, upon the wings of that surgent aspiration which in matters spiritual and secular was rending the old order and bringing in the new; and it was as a directive rather than as a negative spirit that it entered into

the world. In Francis the new romantic temper of the age, voiced by troubadour and crusader, was joyously carried into the service of religion and shot through and through with spiritual values. The fraternity could not escape its birth and affinities.[1] It was in truth a product of the Time-spirit and had therefore a natural relationship with all the seething world in which the Time-spirit could claim a parental right. That, together with the striking personality of Francis, is the explanation of the wonderful influence and immediate success of the movement; that too accounts for much of the trouble which is shortly to enter in amongst the brethren and bring bitter sorrow to the heart of Francis.

On the face of things the trouble began in the endeavour to give the fraternity a more definite organization. Until now it might be said that Francis was not merely the leader of the brethren but their law. They might not all imitate him in every detail of his daily life as did Brother John the Simple, who went so far as to kneel when Francis knelt and to cough when he coughed;[2] but in the more intimate concerns of their vocation they looked to him as their book of life. Without any exaggeration it might be said that the fraternity lived in Francis and saw the world through his interpretation of it: so the brethren came to appreciate poverty and song, the service of love and suffering. Until now they were untroubled by any obtrusive question as to their relationship with the world which lay outside the life of the Porziuncola which Francis had fashioned there. The atmosphere of that life they carried with them, however distant they might travel: it was their conventual grille through which they

[1] Cf. *The Friars and how they came to England*, by the present writer, Introductory Essay, p. 13 *seq.*

[2] Cf. II Celano, 190; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 57.

conversed with the world at large. They still believed in the all-sufficiency of divine faith and love to win the world to Christ: they did not trouble about the human means. And in truth the human means which they had, their own fervent speech and persuasive sympathies and their hard laborious lives, were effective enough for the purpose Francis had actually set before them.

Nevertheless, from the moment that Francis had sent the brethren forth to win the world to Christ, and had thrown the fraternity wide open to admit all sorts and conditions of men, the troublous problem of the relationship of the brethren with the outer world was latent, only waiting for circumstances to reveal it. A world-wide society cannot be governed and led by a simple and immediate dependence upon a single personality: of necessity a system of government must grow up which will stand, if not between the founder's personality and his disciples, at least as the more immediate rule to which both founder and disciple must submit. The fraternity will then develop a corporate consciousness in some way distinct from the personal consciousness of the founder: it will become impressionable to views other than those which commend themselves to him; it may even find itself thinking in contradiction against him. Sometimes behind the immediate contradiction there will be a real agreement of purpose; sometimes not. These divergences of view may result from the intrusions into the fraternity, of elements foreign to its own proper spirit and purpose and the essential mind of the founder; they may also arise from a mere extension of purpose beyond that of which the founder himself is explicitly conscious, but which is inherent in the vocation itself of the brethren.

Once, then, the fraternity is spread far and wide and

become less immediately dependent on the personality of Francis, such vexing problems are sure to arise; the more surely because the origins of the fraternity are, as we have said, in the spirit of the age itself even more truly than in the person of its founder. Thus as this story proceeds we shall find the fraternity troubled as to its proper relationship with the intellectual life of the time; and troubles will arise too in regard to its co-ordination with other elements in the common life of the Catholic Church, with established traditions, papal policy and such like. In all these matters lie pitfalls for the weak and unsteady, and the foreboding of sorrow.

The General Chapter of 1217 marks the parting of the ways in the development of the fraternity. Not that this Chapter had to determine any of the difficult questions which were so soon to cause trouble, but because the policy of expansion and organization therein initiated, inevitably led to a loosening of the close intimacy between the brethren and Francis and to a weakening of their sense of immediate dependence upon him.

The Chapter assembled at Whitsuntide. Easter that year had fallen in the very first of the spring days and so the Pentecost festival came early before the hot sun had spoilt the freshness of tree and soil.[1]

From all the "places" and hermitages of the Order brethren came, many of them newly-received novices who had not yet looked upon the face of Francis.[2] They came from Lombardy and Apulia, from Terra di Lavoro and the mountains overlooking the Adriatic, in fact from every Italian

[1] In 1217 Pentecost fell on 14 May.

[2] At the early Chapters all the brethren, whether professed or novices, might attend. Cf. *Chron. Jordani* in *Anal. Franc.* i. p. 6; Eccleston [ed Little], p. 80.

province. For many of them it was a home-coming; they knew the Porziuncola and loved the shade of its surrounding wood where they had prayed and felt the stirrings of the heavenly life which nowhere seemed so near and so real as in the silences of that holy place. And to the novices and those who had not yet been there, it was the turning of their faces towards the Holy Zion from the captivity in which they had been born. The glory of their vocation was still altogether gathered up in Francis and the wattle huts near Assisi. As the brethren met and welcomed each other their tongues betrayed their origin or up-bringing. Some spoke with their native grace of noble birth; others with the acquired distinction gained in the schools; whilst others had only the art of speech which they had learned toiling for daily bread. The soft sibilant utterance of Umbria mingled with the guttural dialects of Lombardy and the strident tones of the South. But here and there was a brother whose words bespoke a comer from beyond the Alps; one who passing through Italy, had met the brethren and joined their ranks: but as yet the ultramontane brethren were but a handful.

Assembled at the Porziuncola, they gathered together in groups and built for themselves huts of branches of trees, which they collected in the woods around. Though they were an assembly of many hundreds, no distracting noise was allowed in the neighbourhood of the holy chapel, and no loud voice save that of the brother told off to preach. As a rule the brethren must speak in low tones and only when necessary or when they met in small companies to converse on spiritual matters or the affairs of their vocation.[1] But the silence was eloquent with the feeling of life as is the silence of the spring time in the fields.

[1] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 82; *Actus*, cap. 20.

It was a silent uncontentious parliament if you will: yet a true parliament, for every brother, even the youngest novice, might proffer an opinion and would be respectfully listened to. The Chapter was not a mere parade but a deliberative assembly. They gathered together to learn in prayer and mutual intercourse the Divine Will concerning them: each must speak as his conscience impelled him: but none thought to dictate to the others or to impose his own opinion. About the ultimate decisions of the Chapter they had little anxiety: these would be as God willed. For the multitude of the brethren were still living by faith and joyous in the vocation they had found.

Doubtless amongst so many there were some already inclined to criticize the simplicity of the fraternity; men trained in the assertive knowledge of the schools, in decretals and jurisprudence; or accustomed to handle affairs in the world and not forgetful of their experience: but their criticism was held in check by the triumphant faith and devotion to their leader which swayed the gathering.

Two matters had been set down for prayer and consideration: the appointment of Provincial ministers and the sending of brethren to establish the fraternity in the countries outside the Italian peninsula. The second proposal merely signified an extension of the active apostolate of the fraternity, but it rendered more urgently necessary the more systematic organization of the fraternity implied in the appointment of the Provincial ministers.

It would be difficult in any organized system of government to maintain the pristine simplicity which until now had characterized the relations of the brethren with their superiors. The rule of the fraternity was that whenever a number of brethren were living together or travelling on a

journey, one of them was chosen whom the others were to regard as God's Vicar,[1] and to whom they must render obedience. But the conception of authority and obedience as between the brethren, was of that pervading yet easy character which holds in a family or company closely knit by mutual regard and established in one mind and purpose; where too the burdens of authority and obedience are felt lightly because they are borne at the same time by the entire body. Francis' idea of the function of a superior in the fraternity was that of a mother tending her household: it was the antithesis of the idea of lordship.[2] Jesus Christ only could claim that function amongst the brethren; His word as set forth in the Rule and in the common law of the Church, was the only absolute law; and to this all the brethren were equally subject. But the superior had the care of the brethren in the observing of this law: he would interpret to them the Will of Christ in its application to the details of daily life, yet not in the spirit of a personal dominance which did not belong to him, but as one administering the law to which he, as well as others, were immediately bound.

Hence he must regard himself as the servant of the fraternity and himself set the example of that "true and holy obedience" which consists in "voluntary and mutual service

[1] Cf. 3 Soc. 46.

[2] Thus Celano says of Francis and Brother Elias: "*quem loco matris elegerat sibi*" (I Celano, 98). See also the description of Bro. Pacifico, by Bro. Thomas of Tuscany in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.* XXII. p. 492: "*Frater Pacificus . . . ut a beato Francisco pia mater appellaretur*". The idea is also explicitly set forth in that interesting document, "*De religiosa habitatione in eremo*" (*Opuscula*, pp. 83-4). The same conception underlies the title bestowed upon the local superiors who were styled *custodes*, wardens or guardians – and not priors or masters as in other religious communities.

and subjection". For the motive of this obedience is charity, the love of Christ and of the brotherhood for Christ's sake; and it is the charity which induces a man to serve another willingly even in the most menial acts.[1] This "true and holy obedience" was binding equally upon him who held the office of superior as upon all the brethren: it was part of the fealty which the fraternity owed to Him Who "is not come to be ministered unto but to minister".[2] Authority thus expressed in a service of love and estranged from any thought of personal predominance, was received with exalted reverence as the authority of the divinely-humble Christ Himself and worshipfully obeyed. Criticism of a superior's judgment was felt to be a disloyalty to the vocation itself. The brethren would obey the known wish of the superior even though he did not impose it:[3] but the motive was loyalty to the Lord Whom they had vowed to follow; they obeyed Christ in the superior.[4] And this high obedience was the more easily given when authority itself bore the marks of Christ's meek service.

Francis' idea of obedience was in truth drawn from the romance of chivalry; it was the knightly fealty and service and not the servile submission of the legists.

But this chivalric conception of obedience demands an initial condition of liberty—of soul-liberty even more than political or economic—and a constant loyalty, not easily

[1] "*Per caritatem spiritus voluntarie serviant et obediant invicem. Et hæc est vera et sancta obedientia Domini nostri Jesu Christi*" (Reg. I. cap. v.). "*Et nullus vocetur prior sed generaliter omnes vocentur fratres minores. Et alter alterius lavet pedes*" (*ibid.* cap. VI. Cf. Regula II. cap. X.).

[2] Matthew XX. 28 (Vulgate) quoted in Reg. I. cap. IV. Hence the superior was bound in virtue of this obedience to share the hardships of the brethren. See *infra*, Francis' discourse to the friars.

[3] Cf. 3 Soc. 42.

[4] Cf. II Celano, 151: "*Subditus, inquit, prælatum suum non hominem considerare debet, sed illum pro cujus amore est subjectus*".

maintained in a wide and numerous body of men: it soon needs the support of that more impersonal and coercive law upon which states are built. The organization of the fraternity into provinces under Provincial ministers was due not merely to the extension of the Order: it was the expression of the need, beginning to be felt, of a more systematic organization and more impersonal objective government. Highly sensitive as he was, Francis knew that with the appointment of Provincial ministers, something of the simple fraternal life of his "knights of the Round Table" [1] must go: yet he was intently anxious that the primitive character of the fraternity should still maintain itself within the more legal bonds. The superiors must still be ministers and *custodes*, not priors or masters. In promulgating the decision of the Chapter, he thus pleadingly described their office and duty: "The ministers must be the servants of the other brethren and tend them as a shepherd tends his sheep, often visiting them and spiritually instructing and encouraging them. The other brethren on their part must obey the minister in all things which are not contrary to the life of a Friar Minor.

"And between the ministers and the brethren there shall be this rule of conduct: 'Whatsoever ye will that men should do unto you, that do ye to them'; and again this: 'what thou wouldst not have done unto thyself, do it not unto another'. And let the minister-servants remember what the Lord says: 'I came not to be ministered unto but to minister; and that to them is committed the care of the souls of the brethren, and should anyone be lost through the minister's fault and bad example, that minister will have to render an account before our Lord Jesus Christ'." [2]

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 72. [2] Reg. I. cap. IV.

Thus was the office of Provincial minister established and defined.

The provinces were divided according to established geographical boundaries: thus in Italy there were provinces of Umbria, Tuscany, the Marches of Ancona, Lombardy, Terra di Lavoro, Apulia, and Calabria. A certain liberty of choice was given to the brethren as to the province they would join; but generally the brethren preferred to leave themselves in the hands of the ministers.[1] But the stirring moment of the Chapter was when volunteers were called for, to undertake missions beyond the Alps. Probably few amongst the brethren realized the importance of the institution of the ministers. But the missions beyond the Alps appealed to their imagination. True, the countries designated, Spain and Portugal and France, Germany and Hungary (and, as some say, Syria[2]) were all Catholic countries; but the people were strange, speaking unknown tongues. Few of the brethren had travelled far beyond their native Italian province, and the countries beyond the Alps were to them the land of echo. The chosen bands of missionaries were therefore looked upon with something of awe and reverence. No one knew what hardships they might have to encounter.

Not the least uplifted in spirit was Francis as he gazed upon these elect companions. To him it was a renewal of the joy of adventure he had felt in the first days of his own missionary journeys. Nor could he long resist the call their hardihood made to him. Taking aside some of the brethren

[1] Cf. *Chron. Jordani* in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 18, p. 7, also the case of St. Anthony of Padua at the Chapter of 1221, *infra*, p. 260.

[2] Syria in this case would mean that part which was within the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem and not the Mahomedan territories. *Vide infra*, p. 246 note 1.

he addressed them: "My best beloved, it is but right that I should be a pattern and example to all the brethren. I have sent brethren into far-off parts to undergo much labour and shame and hunger and thirst and other necessities: it is only just therefore, and holy obedience requires, that I too go forth into some distant land; and so will the brethren be encouraged to endure patiently their adversities, when they hear that I suffer the same. Go therefore and pray that the Lord may grant me to make choice of the province that shall be most to His praise and the profit of souls and the encouragement of the brethren." The brothers therefore went and prayed as he bade them. When they came back, Francis met them, his face lit up with expectant joy. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the glorious Virgin Mary and all the saints," he exclaimed, "I choose the province of France wherein is a Catholic people who more than all other Catholics manifest a special reverence towards the Body of Christ, which reverence is most pleasing to me. Wherefore will I most readily go amongst them."[1] But it was not only as a land devoted to the Blessed Sacrament that Francis loved France, but as the land of courtesy and song; and with his happy tact and sense of the harmony of things, he therefore chose as one of his companions on this mission, Brother Pacifico, the former "king of verses" or poet laureate.[2]

Some say that Bernard da Quintavalle was the leader of the mission to Spain.[3] The mission to Germany was under the direction of John of Penna—not he of the beautiful visions,[4] but another from Penna in the Abruzzi, a skilful architect and engineer.[5]

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 65. [2] Cf. *Leg. Maj.* IV. 9.

[3] Cf. *Umbria Serafica* in *Misc. Franc.* II. p. 46. [4] *Fioretti*, cap. 44.

[5] Cf. Fra Egidio Giusti, O. M. Convent: *Chi fu veramente l' Architetto della Basilica superiore di S. Francesco in Assisi?* (Assisi, 1909).

So the Chapter broke up in a renewal of fervour and enthusiasm, because of this breaking of the new ground beyond the Alps; and immediately afterwards the roads leading from the Porziuncola, were dotted with groups of friars making their way towards their various provinces.[1]

But before they set out Francis had addressed them thus:

[1] In *Series Provinciarum Ord. F.F. M.M., Anno* 1217, a P. H. Golubovich, in *Archivum Franc. Hist.* Annus I. fasc. I. pp. 2-5: the names of the Provinces and Ministers-Provincial are given after Wadding as follows: *Tuscany*, minister unknown; *Marches of Ancona*, minister, Benedict of Arezzo; *Milan* or *Lombardy*, minister, John of Strachia; *Terra di Lavore*, minister, Augustine of Assisi; *Apulia*, minister unknown; *Calabria*, Daniel of Tuscany; *Germany*, minister, John of Penna; *France*, minister, Pacificus, "king of verses"; *Provence*, minister, John Bonelli; *Spain*, minister, Bernard da Quintavalle (?); *Syria*, minister, Elias. The mission to Germany, however, proved a failure and the German Province was not really constituted till 1221 under the leadership of Cæsar of Spires. On other points too this list is open to objection.

The Chron. XXIV. Gen. places the institution of the province of Provence in 1219 (cf. *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 10). It is doubtful too whether Bro. Elias was sent to Syria in 1217 or 1219. P. Golubovich's list is supported by Sabatier's edition of the *Speculum Perfect.* cap. 65, which says that at the Chapter of 1217 brethren were sent "*ad quasdam provincias ultramarinas*," but in the text of the *Speculum* edited by P. Lemmens, the reading is "*ad quasdam provincias ultramontanas*" (ed. Lemmens, cap. 37). The 3 Soc. cap. 16. says that the brethren at this Chapter were sent "*per universas mundi provincias in quibus fides catholica colitur et servatur*," but makes no mention of Syria. Giordano da Giano frankly confesses that he does not know whether Elias was sent to Syria in 1217 or 1219 (*Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 7, p. 8). Glassberger (*Anal. Franc.* II. p. 9) says that at this Chapter the friars were sent "*fere per universas provincias orbis in quibus fides Catholica viget*".

The Leg. 3 Soc. and Glassberger's Chronicle, however, do not necessarily exclude Syria, since there was already a Latin kingdom of Jerusalem with many Catholic colonies established in Palestine: and the fact that the General Chapter whether of 1217 or 1219 established a Province of Syria, shows that Syria was not altogether considered a missionary region but part of the Catholic world.

"In the name of the Lord go forth two and two, taking the road in all humility and modesty and especially keeping silence from the dawn until the hour of terce; pray to the Lord in your hearts and let no idle or useless word be spoken amongst you. For though you be walking abroad, nevertheless let your conduct be as humble and becoming as in a hermitage or cell. Indeed wherever we are or wherever we travel, we have always our cell with us. Brother Body is our cell and the soul is the hermit who dwells within to pray and meditate upon the Lord. Of little use is a cell made with hands if the soul is not at rest in its own cell."[1] With these words he sped them on their journey.

These first missions beyond the Alps were, like all the early Franciscan missions, ventures of knightly faith and fealty, conceived in the purest spirit of chivalric loyalty and honour. The brethren were sent forth to bear witness to the faith that was in them; their love of Christ and Poverty was to be their sustaining motive; patience and endurance their glory. Theirs was a knightly adventure simply, and no affair of statecraft or cunning policy. The spirit in which the mission was undertaken, is happily set forth in a prose-poem which tells of an incident on the way. Francis, it says, when setting out on his journey to France, wished first to pay a visit to the tombs of the Apostles to commend this new adventure to their protection. He took with him on this pilgrimage, Brother Masseo. On the way they came to a small town and, being hungry, went into the town to beg a meal; Francis taking one street and Masseo another. "Masseo being tall and comely in person, had good pieces of bread given him, large and many, and even entire loaves"; but Francis, "because he was a man of mean appearance and

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 65.

small of stature and accounted a vile beggar by those who knew him not, received nothing but a few mouthfuls and crumbs of dry bread". "When they had begged enough, they went together to a place outside the town, where there was a fair fountain that they might eat; and beside which was also a broad and convenient stone, on which each placed all the alms which he had begged.

"Francis, seeing that the pieces of bread which Brother Masseo had were larger and better than his own, had great joy and spoke thus: 'O Brother Masseo, we are not worthy of so great a treasure'. And as he repeated these words several times, Brother Masseo answered him: 'Father, how can this be called treasure, when we are in such poverty and lack the things of which we have need, we who have neither cloth nor knives nor plates nor porringer nor house nor table nor man servant nor maid servant'. Then said St. Francis: 'And this is what I call a great treasure, that there is nothing here provided by human industry, but everything is provided by Divine Providence, as we may see manifestly in this bread which we have begged, in this stone which serves so beautifully for our table, and in this so clear fountain; and therefore I desire that we should pray to God, that he would cause holy Poverty which is a thing so noble that God Himself was made subject to it, to be loved by us with our whole heart'. And when he had said these words and they had made their prayer and partaken for bodily refreshment of the pieces of bread and drunk of the water, they arose and went their way." This intimate communion with his Lady Poverty had set the heart of Francis in a spiritual rapture. After a time they came to a church. "Francis said to his companion: 'Let us go into this church and pray'. And entering, St. Francis placed himself behind the altar and

betook himself to prayer. And as he prayed he received from the Divine visitation such excessive fervour, which so vehemently inflamed his soul with the love of holy Poverty, that by the increased colour of his face and the unaccustomed opening of his lips it seemed as though he were breathing out flames of love. And coming thus all inflamed, to his companion, he said to him: 'Ah! Ah! Ah! Brother Masseo, yield thyself to me'. And he said this three times, and the third time he lifted Brother Masseo by his breath into the air and threw him from him, to the distance of a long spear: which put Brother Masseo in great astonishment. Now afterwards, relating the matter to his companions, Brother Masseo said that during the time he was raised up and thrown forth by the breath which proceeded from St. Francis, he tasted such sweetness in his soul, and such consolation of the Holy Spirit, that in all his life he had never felt the like.

"And this done, St. Francis said to him: 'My Brother, let us go to St. Peter and St. Paul and pray them to teach us, and to give us to possess the immeasurable treasure of holy Poverty, inasmuch as it is a treasure so exalted, and so divine, that we are not worthy to possess it in our vile bodies, seeing that this is that celestial virtue by which all earthly and transitory things are trodden under foot and all impediments are lifted away from the soul, so that she can freely unite herself to the Eternal God. And this is the virtue which makes the soul, while still retained on earth, converse with the angels in heaven, and this it is which accompanied Christ to His Cross, with Christ was buried, with Christ was raised up, with Christ ascended into heaven, which, being given in this life to the souls who are enamoured of it, facilitates their flight to heaven, seeing that it guards the arms of

true humility and charity. And therefore let us pray the most holy Apostles of Christ, who were perfect lovers of this pearl of the Gospel of Christ, that they will beg for us this grace from our Lord Jesus Christ, that by His most holy mercy, He would grant us to be true lovers, observers and humble disciples of this most gracious, most lovable, evangelical Poverty.'"[1]

Did the sending forth of the brethren into foreign lands produce no other result than this praise of Poverty, the adventure would be memorable: for, as in a lightning-flash, it reveals the mystery of that loyal worship which Francis kept for his ideal Lady Poverty.

[1] *Fioretti*, cap. 12 (C. T. S. transl.); *Actus*, cap. 13; Chron. XXIV. Gen. *Anal. Franc.* tom. III. 117; *De Conformit., Anal. Franc.* tom. IV. p. 608. An interesting comparison may be made between the praises of Poverty here set forth and the prayer to obtain Holy Poverty attributed by Wadding and others to St. Francis, but which is found for the first time in the *Arbor Vitæ* of Ubertino da Casale. Mr. Montgomery Carmichael says of this prayer: "though he (Ubertino) puts this prayer into the mouth of St. Francis, the context points to the fact that he is rather attempting to reproduce the sentiments of the Saint, than giving a prayer literally written by him" (*vide The Lady Poverty*, p. 193). A similar sentiment is found in the *Sacrum Commercium*, cap. VI.; and finds an echo in Dante's *Paradiso*, canto XI. lines 71, 72. It is not at all improbable that Francis went to Rome before setting out for France. He seems to have gone to Rome whenever he undertook any scheme of importance. Thus according to Wadding he went to Rome in 1212 before undertaking the mission to the infidels; and he was certainly in Rome several times during the period we are now entering upon. Cf. II Celano 96, 104, 119, 148; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 67. Nor is it unlikely that whilst in Rome, Francis was told to consult Card. Ugolino at Florence, since Ugolino, as legate in Umbria, would be the necessary representative of the Holy See in those parts. It was probably thus in his capacity as legate that Card. Ugolino came first to act as "protector" of the Order, until the inconvenience of having "many popes" in the persons of succeeding legates, led Francis to request that Ugolino should be permanent protector (cf. *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* no. 14, p. 5).

Francis, when at length he turned his face towards the north, came to Florence: and here ended this journey so far as he himself was concerned. For at Florence he met Cardinal Ugolino, the Papal Legate: and that meeting was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the fraternity.

Ugolino, Cardinal Bishop of Ostia and Legate of the Holy See for central and northern Italy, was one of Innocent the Third's cardinals, and on his father's side was related to the great Pope.[1] At this time he was about sixty years of age; a handsome man, well built and of strong constitution: a man of ability rather than of genius; not gifted with any striking originality of character nor with the soaring inspiration so notable in Pope Innocent; but he was yet a master of statecraft and a forceful man of affairs such as the Court of Rome has in all times so commonly produced. He had a marvellous memory and a clear insight into the bearings of things with which he had to deal. Moreover he was a scholar, well versed in law and the liberal arts and in theology, and a fluent and eloquent speaker.[2]

Innocent III had done well to bring his relative into his intimate counsels when he was seeking for men who would be devoted to the Church's welfare rather than to their own

[1] Two "lives" of Ugolino are given in Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Script.* tom. III. pp. 570-4, and 575-87. The second "life" is evidently by one who knew him well, probably a member of his court. The frank admiration of the writer for his subject is united with an intimate knowledge of details such as one can get only in constant companionship. Not unlikely he was Giovanni di Campania, the Papal notary.

[2] Cf. Muratori, loc. cit. p. 575: "*Forma decorus et venustus aspectu, perspicacis ingenii et fidelis memoriæ prærogativa dotatus, liberalium et utriusque juris peritia eminenter instructus, fluvius eloquentiæ Tullianæ, sacræ paginæ diligens observator et doctor*"

interest, men who in wielding and holding power, secular as well as spiritual, would set an example of personal piety and self-sacrifice. For Cardinal Ugolino was devoted heart and mind to the Church, and like the great Pontiff, he dreamed of a Church not only strong in secular dominion to rule an unruly world, but purified of secular abuses and of wrong-doing, and transfused with the spirit of the Gospel. He himself was ascetic in the midst of the pomp and ceremonial of his official state; and no charge was ever made against the purity and disinterestedness of his personal life. There was a curious commingling of opposing elements in his character. Had his education and circumstances been different he might have found greater satisfaction in the cloister than in the court. There were stirrings of the mystic in him at times, which conflicted with the promptings of that prudence he had learned in the management of men. At such times he would look with desire upon the life which took no heed of the world's actuality but was enraptured into the unearthly claims of the spirit.[1] This strain of mysticism drew him into close sympathy with the penitential movement.

Moreover the cardinal with all his calm political insight and habit of weighing affairs in the scales of common prudence, was yet of an emotional temperament.[2] He was affectionate in disposition and could not resist an appeal to his friendship. He loved to fill the part of a protector and clung tenaciously to those to whom he gave his heart.

[1] Cf. I Celano, 75; II Celano, 63. Bartholomew of Pisa relates that the Cardinal once asked Francis' advice as to whether he should renounce his dignities and become a Friar Minor; but the saint refused to advise him one way or the other. Afterwards Francis foretold Ugolino's elevation to the Papal chair (*Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 454).

[2] *Vide*, e.g. his letters to St. Clare, *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 183.

Before his meeting with Francis at Florence, he had already come to regard him and his fraternity with admiration and was amongst those who held it in favour at the Roman Court. He knew well that there were those about the Court and in the hierarchy who were opposed to the new institute ; [1] and not unlikely the thought had already occurred to him that if the fraternity was to come safely through the shoals of intrigue and the dangers of its own simple enthusiasm, it would need a friend at Court: for the Cardinal of St. Paul, the powerful patron of the brethren, was no longer there to defend and counsel them: he had died the year previous.[2] On his part, Francis knew the Cardinal by reputation and regarded him with reverence not only for his priestly office but because of his blameless life.

But now when they met for the first time in familiar converse, they conceived for each other a strong affection. Francis' confiding nature drew him to the strong man who was so ready to befriend the brethren and who was at once so gracious and sympathetic; and the Cardinal was completely won by the simplicity and unworldliness of Francis: and so between these two men, so widely dissimilar in many respects, there sprang up an intimate friendship. The Cardinal's persuasive influence was at once shown in that he was able to dissuade Francis from continuing his journey to France : though not without need of argument. When first the Cardinal remonstrated that Francis ought to remain in Italy in consideration of the fact that many prelates sought to hinder the work of the fraternity, Francis replied in his vehement way : " My lord, much shame will it be to me if, having sent others of my brethren into far countries, I myself

[1] I Celano, 74 ; Chron. xxiv. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* iii. p. 10.
[2] Eubel, *Hier. Cath.* i. p. 36.

remain in these parts and do not share in the hardships and troubles which await them". To which Cardinal Ugolino answered that none of the brethren ought to be sent into distant countries to die, maybe, of hunger and suffering, and that they would do better to remain in Italy and peacefully pursue their vocation there. Francis cried out warmly: "Think you, my lord, that it is only to these provinces that the Lord hath sent the brethren? Of a truth I tell you that God hath chosen and sent the brethren for the profit and salvation of the souls of all the men that are in the world; and not only in the countries of the faithful but even in the lands of the infidels shall they be received and win many souls." The Cardinal thereupon made no further effort to restrain the missionary enterprise of the brethren at large; perhaps he now recognized that it were wise not to hold back the brethren nor to repress their energies; yet he prevailed upon Francis himself to turn back and to send the brethren to France under another leader.

Thus it came about that Brother Pacifico, the poet laureate, was appointed to establish the fraternity in the land that Francis loved, next to his own Umbria, above all countries in the world.[1]

Like Francis himself, Pacifico had the true troubadour spirit, at once poetic and adventurous. When Francis had first met him some five years previously, he was a gay courtier, wearing his fresh laurels. They had both come on a visit to a convent of nuns at San Severino in the Marches of Ancona, where the poet heard the friar preach and was at once converted in heart. After the sermon he sought out the preacher to ask advice concerning his soul. Francis was setting before

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 65; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 9; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc* III. p. 10.

him the greater nobility of service in the court of the Great King of heaven, when Pacifico exclaimed: "What need of further argument? Let us come to deeds. Take me away from men and give me back to the Most High Emperor." And there in the presence of the crowd of youths who had come with him, Pacifico became a friar.

To him his spiritual guide was always "the herald" of the Lord of heaven, and his imagination was apt to see him invested with the insignia of his spiritual heraldry.

Once—that was on the occasion of his conversion—he saw Francis bedecked with two flaming swords crosswise; another time, before this journey to France, when Francis was newly kindled with the thought of his spiritual crusade, he saw the forehead of his leader, adorned with the sign *Thau* emblazoned in many colours.[1]

He might not, perhaps, be the man to establish the brethren in the estimation of matter-of-fact prelates and suspicious defenders of the faith: and in this respect he does not seem to have been successful. But to those who had ears for his song, he could sing the message of Poverty convincingly and well.

Francis returned to Assisi: God willed it so and he must obey: for already he was convinced that Cardinal Ugolino was set by Providence to be his counsellor and support: and, therefore, before he bade the Cardinal farewell, he had petitioned him to preside at the next General Chapter.

Of the experiences of the brethren who went beyond the Alps at this time, the story has been summed up in this passage from the Legend of the Three Companions: "They were received in certain provinces but were not permitted to build dwelling-places; and from other provinces they were

[1] II Celano, 106; Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 3; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 9.

expelled in the fear that they might prove to be infidels: since although the lord Innocent III had sanctioned their Order and Rule, yet had he not confirmed it by letter; for which reason the brethren endured many trials from clerics and laymen. Wherefore the brethren were compelled to flee from divers provinces, and thus straitened and afflicted, sometimes even robbed and beaten by thieves, they returned in great bitterness of spirit to the Blessed Francis."[1]

Other chroniclers give more explicit details. In France they were taken for heretics and when asked whether they were Albigenses, not knowing what the word might mean, they neither affirmed nor denied, and so the people were confirmed in their suspicion. A similar fate awaited the brethren who were sent to Portugal, and for a time they had perforce to wander about like vagabonds without a dwelling-place, until Urracha, Queen of Alfonso II, took them under her protection. They fared even worse in Germany, where the language was altogether unintelligible to them. One word only they secured out of the torrent of strange sounds they heard; which word at first brought them comfort. For seeing them poor and weary, some kindly soul asked if they wanted shelter, to which the brothers, not understanding the question but glad of fellowship, replied "*Ja:*" and shelter was given them. But when later, others came inquiring whether they were heretics from Lombardy, the brethren again replied "*Ja*": and then the trouble began. They were stripped and beaten and driven back towards the frontier. Those Germans were good Catholics: but the brethren understood only their blows and fury, and fled back to Assisi carrying with them a fast opinion that no Christian should venture amongst the Germans unless he were pre-

[1] 3 Soc. 62.

pared for martyrdom. So, too, in Hungary they were taken for heretics and mummers, and made the sport of the country they passed through and even treated with the grossest insult. Only in Spain do they seem to have met with a kindly reception: a fact which might be accounted for if, as tradition has it, this mission was led by Bernard da Quintavalle who had already visited the country.[1] "And so," says one, "that entire mission came to nothing, because perhaps the time for sending forth was not yet come: since there is a time for everything under the sun."[2] But this philosopher was thinking chiefly of his own province of Germany, where the brethren gained nothing but the merit of such hardship and patience as was theirs. In France and Portugal, though they suffered much, the brethren arrived to stay: as also in Spain. But it was the last adventure of unaided faith so far as the fraternity in general were concerned.

The brethren were beginning to learn that they who would gain the world, must take account of the world's demands. Two causes contributed to the failures: the inability of the brethren to speak the tongue of the people they went to, and their lack of knowledge of the conditions prevailing outside Italy. But even more than this the failures must be attributed to the fact that they carried with them no authorizing document from bishops or Pope; and that, at a time when the profession of poverty was mostly the mark of a heretic, brought them at once under suspicion.

There can be no denying it: the faith of the fraternity was bruised in this first encounter with the larger world. The latent disaffection of some of the brethren with the

[1] Cf. *Chron. Jordani* in *Anal. Franc.* I. nos. 4, 5, 6, p. 3; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 10 *seq.*; Glassberger in *Anal. Franc.* II. p. 9 *seq.*

[2] *Chron. Jordani*, loc. cit. no. 8, p. 3.

simplicity of Francis, now found utterance, and a sense of failure saddened the loyalty of many.

Already some were looking to the Cardinal Legate to supply Francis' lack of the world's prudence, and they did not fail to set before him the story of this disaster. Francis took it all very humbly. He would have been more glad at heart had the brethren taken their failure in simple faith and patience and without discouragement. But Cardinal Ugolino had now taken the fraternity under his protection and, seeing in him the authority of the Church, Francis loyally submitted the fraternity to his direction.

Before the brethren were sent abroad again, they were armed with commendatory letters from the Holy See.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHAPTER OF MATS.

The two years following upon the General Chapter of 1217 were a period of intense missionary activity for the brotherhood, as the vast increase in the numbers of the brethren testifies: for at the Chapter of 1219 about five thousand brethren were there assembled.[1] Yet few incidents of the period are recorded. It was one of those brooding periods when the earth is windless and the sky unbroken, though in the hidden spaces the elements of disturbance are gathering force, sooner or later to burst through the still but heat-gathering heavens with undeniable storm.

A new era had in fact begun in the history of the fraternity. The brethren were no longer regarded by the Holy See as a free company, acting under the Papal authority but not recognized as part of its regular army.

Already Cardinal Ugolino, surveying the ecclesiastical situation with the eye of an organizer, had determined in his own mind that the right policy was to create a new ecclesiastical army out of the two fraternities of Friars Minor and Friars Preachers which would be directly under the orders of the Holy See. With such a body of men ready to its hand.

[1] Cf. *Leg. Maj.* iv. 10; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 68; Eccleston [ed. Little], coll. vi. p. 40; *Actus*, cap. 20.

the Papacy might effectively carry out its scheme of internal reforms in the hierarchy and in the Church at large.

The Cardinal had quite definite views as to the shape these reforms must take, and how these new fraternities might be utilized for the purpose. The Church needed bishops of unworldly mind and ascetic conduct, who would think more of the souls of the people than of temporalities and secular honours. The monastic state needed to be recalled to its former austerity and discipline. The intellect of the Catholic world was being dissipated in purely secular studies, and there was need of preachers who could meet the heretics, armed at once with a blameless life and theological learning. In the two new Orders of friars Ugolino saw the providential means of carrying through these most urgent reforms. In his mind's-eye he beheld the friars occupying episcopal sees, setting the older Orders an example of monastic austerity combined with active work for the faith, and reviving the study of theology. Perhaps at this time he looked more to the Dominicans for the revival of sacred learning. For Dominic had made study one of the primary conditions of his new Order. One of his first acts in founding the Friars Preachers had been to send six of his companions to the schools to go through a course of study to fit them for preaching. He himself during the Lent of 1217 had gained the applause of the Roman Court by his conferences upon the epistles of St. Paul. Yet amongst the Friars Minor were a number of schoolmen. The Cardinal would take that into account in his views concerning the utility of the fraternity.

He had already pleaded with the two founders to allow their brethren to be raised to the episcopal dignity as occasion offered itself when sees were vacant. "In the primitive Church," argued Ugolino, "the pastors of the Church were

poor men, and men on fire with charity and not with greed. Why should we not take some of your brethren and make them bishops and prelates?" Dominic had replied: "My lord, my brethren, if they know it, are already raised to an honourable estate; nor if I can help it, will I permit them to accept other title of dignity". And Francis had said: "My brethren are for this reason called minors that they should not presume to become the greater amongst their fellow-men. Our vocation teaches them to abide in the common way and to follow in the footsteps of Christ's humility, whereby in the end they will be exalted beyond others in the eyes of the saints. If you wish that they bear fruit in the Church of God, hold them and keep them in the state of their vocation, and make even the unwilling to return to the humble level. Wherefore, Father, I pray that you will on no account allow them to be raised to prelacies, lest they become the prouder because they are poorer and carry themselves conceitedly over others."[1] The Cardinal admired the humility of the two founders: in that same spirit he would wish all their brethren to remain: but he did not share their fears nor did he admit the validity of their more restricted views—restricted, as he thought, by their own admirable humility and by the very intensity of their mental concentration upon the primary purposes of their institutes. It was, you see, the demand of the world for a practical utility corresponding to its own immediate needs, meeting with an inspired purpose, at once more universal and exclusive, more piercingly poignant yet more aloof, than transient policies. Cardinal Ugolino's scheme was to harness these inspired purposes to the chariot of the Papal policy of reform; and when the Cardinal set his mind upon any scheme he clung

[1] II Celano, 148; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 43.

to it with confident persistence. And in this case he felt himself justified in over-riding the scruples of the founders not only because of the sincerity of his own reforming projects, but because he was persuaded that only by adapting themselves to the immediate exigencies of the Papal policy, would the fraternities overcome the suspicion and active opposition with which they were regarded by many of the conservative prelates. He was much concerned lest this opposition should eventually break up the fraternities, and he exerted himself continually to establish them in the favour of the Pope and the goodwill of the Roman Court. Dominic needed his protection less than Francis did. The character and purpose of the Friars Preachers was more easily grasped than that of the Friars Minor: their direct purpose was to repel the heretics and safeguard the faith. But the purpose of Francis was not so easily put into an intelligible phrase. He was a forceful moving spirit grasping at intangible ideals, who repelled more prudent, level-headed men when they considered him from afar: one never knew how he might end or how far he might want to go. Ugolino himself had absolutely no doubt as to his sanity and sanctity: Francis, he was convinced, was a saint and heaven-sent reformer.

To bring the sceptics to his own view he once arranged that Francis should preach before the Pope and the Papal Court. He was anxious Francis should make a good impression, and induced him therefore to prepare a sermon carefully beforehand and commit it to memory. Francis acquiesced: but when the time came to preach, every word that he had learned vanished from his mind: fortunately perhaps for the preacher and his audience; for recollecting himself awhile, he then spoke as his heart impelled him. He was the troubadour herald of divine love, all afire with his

message: the words poured forth mellifluously, yet with torrential eagerness; his feet danced to the music of his words. At first Ugolino held his breath in a great fear and prayed with all his heart that this preaching might not bring derision and mockery on his friend. But soon his fear was set at rest. Curiosity gave place to respectful attention; many of those present could not restrain their tears. Francis had conquered. But one wonders what would have been the effect, had he managed to utter his carefully-prepared discourse, he who was nothing but when he was wholly and spontaneously himself.[1]

Meanwhile the spirit of discontent was becoming more and more articulate in the fraternity, and not a few of the brethren, chiefly it would seem among the schoolmen, chafed under the simplicity of Francis and his exalted idealism. They had neither his simple faith nor his wholesome personality. The untrodden ways along which he would lead them, brought them a sense of estrangement from the actual world, Francis himself never felt that estrangement because he instinctively found his neighbourhood with the essentially human and vital in the life around him. But these others had been trained to regard life only as it existed in conventional and traditional forms. Outside these forms they could walk only haltingly and without conviction.

Their failure to enter fully into Francis' views was due partly to temperament, partly to education, partly doubtless to the persistent obtrusion of a more matter-of-fact world

[1] *Leg. Maj.* XII. 7; I Celano, 73. Wadding is probably near the correct date in placing this sermon in 1217. From the wording of Celano it is clear that Francis was not yet very well known to Pope Honorius and his Court; nor does he seem to have been very well known to Cardinal Ugolino, who surely in after years would hardly have asked his friend to write his sermon!

upon their daily experience. In a more or less vague pervasive fashion they had been genuinely influenced by the spirit of Francis: as men are apt to be influenced by a forceful personality in a time of keen perceptions and emotions. He had come into their lives like a fresh tonic breeze; stirring their spiritual emotions, and giving them a sense of spiritual freedom, upon the strength of which they abandoned their secular avocations and enlisted under his banner. But of the multitude who donned his armour not all could take to themselves his thought or live freely in the rare atmosphere of his desire. Instinctively they turned to the traditional and immediately-practical ways in which to exercise the heightened spiritual vitality with which Francis had endowed them. They were unconscious that in doing so they would divert the stream of the Franciscan life from its own proper course and scatter its energies to its own loss. Francis' simple purpose was to convert the world to the wisdom and beauty of the Christ-life as it is revealed in the poor and suffering Redeemer. And he held that the fraternity was established by Christ to set an example of this Christ-life, undefiled by any compromise with secular ambition and prudence: it had no other aim or duty, no other rightful joy. The discontented spirits amongst the brethren did not deny this purpose, but they quarrelled with Francis' teaching concerning no compromise with the world's prudence. At least, they held, he should accept the world's prudence in so far as other religious men accepted it.

Francis had no condemnation for other religious men: the prudence of the world is good in its own place; and these other religious men were the keepers of their own conscience: God did not lead all men in the same way. But the way of the Friars Minor was to live and work as Jesus

Christ Himself lived and worked on earth, in humility and meekness and poverty, using only spiritual means and not relying upon any secular influence. If the brethren would convert men they must be willing to suffer and not shield themselves with letters of protection; they must be exiles upon the earth without any earthly possessions; they must be in fact and in appearance as the least of men and not occupy exalted positions; they must preach the Gospel in its simplicity and not with a proud assumption of secular learning.

It was perhaps at this period when the murmurs of the discontented brethren were beginning to trouble his thoughts, that Francis uttered his "parable of perfect joy". Tradition says he was on his way from Perugia to the Porziuncola one day in the winter time when the cold was very biting. Brother Leo, his companion—one who never doubted the wisdom of his leader—was walking ahead, leaving Francis to his meditation, when he heard the voice of Francis calling to him: "O Brother Leo, although the Friars Minor in these parts give a great example of sanctity and good edification, write it down and note it well that this is not perfect joy". And as they continued their journey, Francis called to Leo again and yet again, instancing the gift of miracles, the knowledge of all languages and sciences, and of holy Scripture, and even the power of preaching whereby all infidels might be converted to the faith of Christ: in all these things he declared there was not perfect joy. At length Brother Leo asked: "Father, I pray thee, wherein is perfect joy?" Francis replied: "When we shall have come to St. Mary of the Angels, soaked as we are with the rain and frozen with the cold, encrusted with mud and afflicted with hunger, and shall knock at the door, if the porter should come and ask, angrily, 'Who are you?' and we reply: 'We are two of your

brethren'; he should say: 'You speak falsely; you are two good-for-nothings, who go about the world stealing alms from the poor; go your way': and if he would not open the door to us but left us without, exposed till night to the snow and the wind and the torrents of rain, in cold and hunger; then if we should bear so much abuse and cruelty and such a dismissal patiently, without disturbance and without murmuring at him, and should think humbly and charitably that this porter knew us truly and that God would have him speak against us—O Brother Leo, write that this would be perfect joy." In this strain Francis continued recounting possible humiliations and buffetings of body and mind. "If we should bear all these things," said he, "patiently and with joy, thinking on the pains of the Blessed Christ, as that which we ought to bear for His love—O Brother Leo, write that it is in this that there is perfect joy."[1]

The discontented brethren no doubt listened with respect to this parable when it was afterwards recounted to them, but whilst admitting the ultimate conclusion as a counsel of personal perfection, they would yet hold to the lesser joys as the more immediate evidences of the fraternity's utility.

They were doubtful whether the simplicity of the brethren did tend to the edification of the people, at least as much as the more ordered austerity of the ancient monastic rule; they were certain that Francis under-rated the joy of learning: and they would give much to be able to say that all the

[1] *Fioretti*, cap. VII. (C.T.S. transl.); *Acta*, cap. 7: cf. *Opuscula*, Admonit. v. p. 8. The *Fioretti* gives us the parable as enshrined in oral tradition, and as it was retold by the brethren with a view to accentuate the ultimate conclusion. But it is substantially contained in the Admonition. It is noteworthy that in the *Fioretti* Leo is bidden to "write it down". The Admonition, therefore, may be Leo's written résumé of the parable; or it may be another recital of the same thought, dictated by Francis himself.

infidels were converted to the faith of Christ. And whilst Francis was praising his Lady Poverty for the life itself which he found in her, for the nearer approach which she made for him to the Lord he worshipped; these others held her as a handmaiden to serve them in achieving less mystical purposes. So the storm elements were gathered when the brethren came together at the Pentecost Chapter, which was afterwards known as "the Chapter of Mats," because of the vast number of wattle huts hastily improvised by the arriving brethren.[1] At the outset an incident happened which was in some way to set the note to the temper of this assembly. Francis had been on an evangelizing tour and only reached the Porziuncola when the preparations for the Chapter were already well advanced. To his dismay he found a large stone building erected near the chapel. The citizens of Assisi had built it for the better accommodation of the Chapter. They had not waited to consult Francis; probably they meant to forestall his opposition: saints, like other folk, need at times to be managed tactfully. So they built the hall and awaited events. Quick was Francis' resentment at this indignity offered to the Lady Poverty in her own home. Without delay he took with him some of the brethren, and climbed upon the roof and began to pull it down. Word was sent hastily to the civic authorities, and messengers and soldiers arrived to stop the demolition. "This building," they cried to Francis, "is not yours; it belongs to the city." And

[1] Wadding is probably right in describing the Chapter of 1219 as the "Chapter of Mats"; although John de Komorowo gives this title to the Chapter of 1221 (cf. *Anal. Franc.* II. p. 18, n. 8). But the *Spec. Perfect.* distinctly says that Cardinal Ugolino presided at the "Chapter of Mats," whereas Cardinal Rainerio presided at the Chapter of 1221 (cf. *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 16, p. 6). Giordano's description of the wattle-huts in 1221 is true of all the earliest Chapters.

their protest was upheld by the seneschal of the Chapter, an English brother named de Barton. Francis from the roof replied: "If so be this house is yours, I have no wish to touch it"; and straightway he came down.[1] What else could he do? Yet in his heart there was a foreboding of the trouble at hand: if at the Porziuncola the brethren would tolerate this appearance of disloyalty to their chosen poverty, how could the brethren elsewhere be kept true to their faith?

On Whitsunday morning Cardinal Ugolino, who was to preside at the Chapter, arrived from Perugia where he then had his court: with him came a retinue of nobles and clerics; and from all the surrounding country men of all ranks had assembled to witness this unusual gathering.

When the cardinal's approach was announced, the brethren went out in procession to meet him. At the sight of them in their coarse habits and bare feet, Ugolino was much moved; here was an army of Christ such as he had prayed for in his dreams of reform, and with the instinct of the born commander, he dismounted from his horse, put off his rich mantle and shoes, and barefoot like the brethren themselves, walked behind them to the church.[2] There he sang High Mass, Francis assisting as deacon. When Mass was over, Francis mounted a pulpit and preached to the brethren. His text was a minstrel's chant:—

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap 7; II Celano, 57; Eccleston [ed. Little], coll. vi, p. 40.

[2] 3 Soc. 61. Cf. I Celano, 100. Bartholomew of Pisa (*Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 454) says Ugolino often put on the habit of the friars when in their company; and that he was accustomed on Maundy Thursday to be clothed in the habit when washing the feet of the poor. Cf. Salimbene, *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.*, XXXII. p. 680; Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 228.

Great things we have promised,
But greater are promised to us;
What we have promised let us fulfil,
To what we are promised let us look forward.
A brief delight and punishment for ever;
A little suffering and glory infinite!

Upon this theme he figured the life of a Friar Minor—a life of obedience and love, of prayer and patience and chastity, of peace and concord with God and men, of humility and meekness, unworldliness and poverty, and as the sum of all, the casting of all care for oneself upon "the good Shepherd and Nurse of soul and body, our Lord Jesus Christ the Blessed". The same lesson he had preached in the beginning when the brethren were but three or four in number. To some it had seemed a mad idea then that men should have no care for their own bodily being and leave it all to God. To-day the world did not call Francis mad: he was too manifestly a saint. Yet some of them doubted his wisdom when, pointing the moral to his lesson, he commanded the five thousand friars present to give no thought during the Chapter to the providing of food or to any other bodily need, but to concern themselves wholly with prayer and the praises of God. In the event, Francis' faith was abundantly justified, for whilst the Chapter lasted, the roads leading to the Porziuncola were kept busy with mules and asses laden with provisions for the multitude of friars.[1] But this miracle, as they

[1] *Actus*, cap. 20; *Fioretti*, cap. XVII. The story as told in the *Actus* goes on to relate how St. Dominic was won over to absolute poverty by seeing how St. Francis' faith was fulfilled. But Dominic was in Spain at the time of the Chapter (cf. *Acta SS.* Augusti, tom. I. pp. 485-6). It is not improbable that he may have been present at another Chapter where similar events occurred: for the first Chapters present many common features. It is, however, noteworthy that Dominic introduced the rule of absolute poverty into his Order in 1220, influenced most probably by the example of the Friars Minor.

would deem it, might bear witness to the holiness of Francis; yet it could hardly establish a rule for general imitation. Evidently the fraternity needed more practical government: at least that was the mind of many present; and these appealed to the Cardinal for support for their views. Francis replied in an outburst of indignant sorrow: "My brethren, my brethren! The Lord has called me by the way of simplicity and humility, and this way hath He pointed out to me in truth for myself and for them who are willing to believe me and imitate me. Wherefore I will not that you name to me any other Rule, neither of St. Benedict nor of St. Augustine, nor of St. Bernard, nor any other way or manner of living beside that which the Lord in His mercy hath shown and given me. The Lord told me that He willed me to be poor and foolish in this world, and that He willed not to lead us by any way other than by that knowledge. But with this learning and wisdom of yours, may the Lord confound you, and I trust in the castellans of the Lord that through them God will punish you, and that you will return to your vocation for all your fault-finding, whether you will or no." [1]

For the moment the dissident brethren were silenced; but they were not convinced. Their immediate outlook concerning the fraternity was radically different from their founder's; and it was not in Francis to argue the point logically.

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 68; the reading of the Vatican MS., which I have followed, is more in accordance with Bartholomew of Pisa (*Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 143) than that of the Mazarin MS., which makes Francis say: "*He* [*the Lord*] *willed me to be a new Covenant in this world*".

This outburst of Francis is fully in accord with his character (cf. e.g. II Celano, 156). Moreover one may note the similarity between the conclusion of this admonition and Francis' words to the Cardinal given in II Celano, 148: "*Tenete illos . . . et ad plana reducite vel invitos*".

He was a poet bearing witness to the vision he saw: he was neither logician nor politician to deal with the arguments of those who were against him. His critics might bow for awhile before the fervour and sincerity of his pleading. Many of the brethren probably imagined that the trouble was finished, but Cardinal Ugolino, with his knowledge of men, would be thoughtful of the morrow, and doubtless was thankful in his mind that Providence had made him the friend of Francis and the brethren for the difficult future which lay before them.

It were easy, and as foolish as it were easy, to brand the dissident brethren as weaklings in their vocation or as traitors to Francis. That some of them merited to be thus branded is doubtless true. But for the most part they sincerely reverenced Francis and were proud to own him their leader. They felt the stirring of his spirit and gladly responded to it, as far as it was in them to respond. With these the trouble was not of their own making: it was the perennial difficulty found by a multitude in accepting as a guide in life, an ideal which demands a clear, spiritual insight and a more than common aloofness from the set ways of the world. In such case men suffer because of a lack of the rare simplicity required for the perfect understanding and realization of the ideal life proposed to them. They are pulled by two loyalties and are apt to cut an unheroic figure in consequence. And yet were it not for such men the world would be much the poorer morally and spiritually. They retail the spiritual life much as the ordinary intelligent student retails the message of a master, and it is through the more commonplace intelligence that the genius permeates the world. Only at times the student is apt to misread his text either in the letter or worse still in the spirit: yet for that reason one does

not universally condemn the purpose of the student nor indict his sincerity. So much must be said for the dissident brethren, if we would rightly appreciate this trouble which had now come into Francis' life.

But the Chapter came to some definite decisions in spite of the trouble which overclouded it. The established provinces were confirmed and others instituted;[1] but chiefly it was determined to send missions to the infidels. One band of friars, including Brother Giles,[2] was set apart for Tunis; another, under the leadership of Brother Vitale, for Morocco;[3] whilst—and this perhaps was the surprise of the Chapter—Francis was to undertake a mission to the Mahometans in Egypt.

[1] Thus France was divided into three provinces—the provinces of France proper, of Provence, and of Aquitaine. John Bonelli "the cudgel of Florence," was appointed Minister of Provence; and Christopher of Romandiola, Minister of Aquitaine. Cf. Golubovich, *Arch. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. I. p. 4; *vide supra*, p. 246.

[2] Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 78.

[3] *Ibid.* *Vide infra*, p. 283. Vitale fell ill in Spain and so did not reach Morocco; so his companions went on without him under the leadership of Brother Berardo.

CHAPTER III.

FRANCIS GOES TO THE EAST.

To anyone who did not know Francis, his decision to undertake a mission to the infidels at this critical juncture would surely seem but another indication of his lack of common prudence. In truth it was the highest wisdom.

He was not set to fashion the world's commoner ways with needful compromise and regard for the weaker faith, but to bear witness to a higher, more absolute truth which in its purity might be beyond the practical politics of the actual world and only intelligible to the few.

Francis' power was in his fidelity to the truth as he saw it and in his entire absorption in the vision which led him on. Because it was a true vision of life, it would compel the world's homage, even though the world could not fully understand and accept it; and in this homage the world would be, in some measure at least, ruled by it. But if Francis had turned from the following of his vision to argue by the way, his argument would have been of little avail, because the vision itself would have been lost sight of; since only in his faithful quest was the vision itself revealed. Never was it more needful than now that he should be just himself, the perfect knight of a spiritual chivalry. It is not for a soldier in the act of battle to debate the merits of his loyalty, when the cause to which his faith is pledged depends upon his own good blows. Instinctively Francis felt that,

and it made him the more urgent to take part in this new adventure for the love of Christ, which at his own suggestion the Chapter had agreed to.

And this time Cardinal Ugolino did not prevent his leaving Italy. Whether he attempted to do so at first and afterwards gave way to the pleading of Francis; or whether he straightway consented, we do not know.[1]

Nor is it possible to say how far the Cardinal was concerned in the appointment of the two Vicars-General who were to govern the fraternity during Francis' absence.

One of these, Brother Matthew of Narni, a man of noted sanctity,[2] was to reside at the Porziuncola and receive the novices; the other, Brother Gregory of Naples, was to travel through the provinces "to console the brethren".[3] In after years this Gregory of Naples was to acquire an unenviable

[1] M. Sabatier suggests that the Cardinal favoured Francis' absence at this time in order that he himself might have a freer hand in dealing with the fraternity: but this is pure assumption based only upon M. Sabatier's theory that the Cardinal was an out-and-out partisan of the dissident friars (cf. *Vie de S. François.* p. 265 *seq.*). But the facts of the case as history records them, rather show that Ugolino was honestly endeavouring to act impartially as between Francis and the dissidents and to bridge over the difficulties. As a man of affairs he frequently supported the dissidents in what he deemed a more practical policy: at the same time he was truly anxious for the observance of the rule and ideals of Francis, and was anxious to safeguard them against an unspiritual laxity.

An instance may be found in the letter which Honorius III wrote to the Friars (Minors and Preachers) who were sent to Morocco in 1225—a letter probably dictated by Ugolino as Cardinal-Protector. The Friars had found that they could not get alms of food in that country and had requested a dispensation allowing the use of money. The dispensation was granted, but only for so long as the necessity forced the Friars to use it: "*quamdiu præscripta vos arctat necessitas . . . dum tamen fraus non interveniat, sive dolus, vel sinceritatem vestram cupiditas non seducat*".—Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 26.

[2] Cf. *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 242.

[3] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 11, p. 4.

reputation;[1] and how he fulfilled the trust now committed to him, we shall soon see.

The two Vicars were both good preachers; and Gregory of Naples had been trained in the schools.[2]

The government of the fraternity being thus arranged, Francis set out for Ancona, to find a passage in one of the boats which were to carry crusaders to the East about the feast of St. John the Baptist on 24 June.[3] He was accompanied by Brother Peter Cathanii, the learned doctor of laws, who in the past had acted as Francis' Vicar at the Porziuncola; by Brothers Illuminato[4] and Leonard, both men of

[1] He was appointed Provincial of France in 1221 or 1222. At the death of Francis, Elias addressed a letter to him (*vide infra*, p. 261). In 1240, he was deposed from the Provincialate and imprisoned on account of his cruelty to the brethren (Eccleston [ed. Little], coll. vi, p. 36). M. Sabatier identifies him with a Gregory of Naples who became Bishop of Bayeux in 1274 (cf. *Spec. Perfect.* p. 333) but this is very doubtful (cf. P. Hilarin Felder, *Histoire des Études*, p. 181, n. 5). Concerning this Bishop of Bayeux, *vide Gallia Christiana*, pp. 369-70; also *Études Franciscaines*, XXIV. p. 615 *seq.* and XXVI. p. 411 *seq.* M. Sabatier has published in *Spec. Perfect.* append. VII. p. 332, a letter of Gregory of Naples which purports to have been written "anno Dni. 1219, 13 Kalendas Januar. in festo SS. Fabiani et Sebastiani". The letter declares the conditions upon which the Friars Minor receive a house at Auxerre. The date of the letter, however, cannot be authentic. Henry de Vill-neuve—mentioned in the letter—was consecrated Bishop of Auxerre only on 20 September, 1220 (cf. Eubel, *Hierarch. Cath.* p. 121); besides which, the feast of SS. Fabian and Sebastian is on the 13 Kalends of February. Possibly the date of the letter should be MCCXXIIII instead of MCCXVIIII as M. Sabatier gives it. Gregory of Naples was minister of France when Haymo of Faversham entered the Order, sometime between 22 May, 1222, and Easter, 1224 (cf. Eccleston [ed. Little], pp. 34-35).

[2] Two of his sermons are preserved in the Bibliot. Nationale of Paris. Cf. Little's Eccleston, p. 36, n. *a*.

[3] Cf. *Acta SS.* Octob. II. p. 611; P. Sabatier, *Vie die S. François*, p. 258.

[4] Illuminato had been lord of Rocca Accarina in the Valley of Rieti. Cf. M. Achille Sansi, *Documenti storici*, p. 269, quoted by P. Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect*, p. 306, n. 3.

noble birth; by Brother Barbaro, perhaps the Barbaro who had joined him in the earliest days of the fraternity, and others. They were thirteen in all; and it is said that the number might have been greater, so eager were many of the brethren to share in this adventure.[1]

Leaving Ancona, the band of missionaries came first to Cyprus where Brother Barbaro lost his temper in a sharp dispute with another brother, but immediately humbled himself, much to the edification of a nobleman of the island.[2] About the middle of July they reached Acre, the stronghold of the Crusaders on the Syrian coast.[3]

Thence after a few days Francis sailed on to Egypt to join the Christian army besieging Damietta; from which point he meant to penetrate into the land of the infidel. This was Francis' first experience of those military expeditions which had aroused his enthusiasm in his youth and which still symbolized to him the hardihood and adventure of his vocation. The glory of chivalry mingled in his mind with this actual warfare for the Faith which was gathering the knighthood of Christendom beneath the walls of Damietta: it lay like a sunlit mist over the spread-out army of the Cross, giving it a mystic beauty.

But very quickly Francis learned that here too, in the

[1] Bartholomew of Pisa (cf. *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 481) relates that Francis being unwilling to show favouritism in the choice of his companions, called a little child and bade him point out the friars who were to accompany him.

[2] II Celano, 155; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 88.

[3] Golubovich, *Bibliotheca-Bio-Bibliografica*, p. 93. According to Mariano of Florence, St. Francis touched also at Crete. Cf. *ibid.* p. 77. Golubovich asserts (p. 93) that St. Francis left all his companions at Acre, excepting Brother Illuminato, with whom *alone* he went on to Egypt. I know not on what authority he makes this statement, which seems in contradiction with II Celano, 30.

camp over which one of the most sacred emotions of the Christian people yearned expectantly, the purest ideal rubbed shoulders with the most sordid. Heroes there were, fearless and sincere in their religious devotion, who would die for the Cross with the martyr's piety: but for the most part the Cross was a mere war-cry, and the vision which beckoned the crusader onward was but a purely secular love of adventure, or worse still, lust of plunder and the vicious liberty of the camp. To Francis the shameless vice in the Christian army was sacrilegious defilement of a sacred cause, and he did not wonder at the disasters which marked the progress of this drawn-out siege.[1] So far the fortune of war was balancing between the two armies, though there had been much bloodshed. But towards the end of August the crusaders prepared for a grand assault upon the city. Francis, with prophetic insight, knew that the assault was doomed to failure and was much troubled and could not decide whether to warn the leaders of the army or keep silence. The crusaders were confident of victory. "If I tell them disaster will happen to them," said Francis to one of his companions, "they will think me a fool; yet if I remain silent I shall not escape the judgment of my conscience. Tell me, therefore, what think you I should do?" The brother replied: "Less than nothing is it for thee to be judged by men; for it is not now that they will begin to call thee a fool".

So Francis went and gave his warning. The army, however, laughed and went gaily forward to the attack. Francis in an agony of soul dared not watch the battle, but twice he

[1] The siege of Damietta was begun about 24 August of the preceding year by Leopold, Duke of Austria. The Papal Legate, Cardinal Pelagio, arrived in the besieging lines in September, bringing with him an Italian army. Cf. Golubovich, op. cit. p. 89.

sent his companion to see how things were happening. Each time the brother returned, saying he could see nothing. A third time Francis sent him out, and then he came back to relate that the Christian army was falling back in disarray. That day the crusaders lost six thousand slain and captive. Francis grieved much over the dead, especially over the fallen knights of Spain who had maintained the attack with utmost gallantry so that few of them returned.[1] Negotiations were now opened between the leaders of the crusade and the Sultan of Egypt. On both sides it was merely a stratagem to mark time: the crusaders were daily expecting reinforcements from across the sea: the Sultan hoped diplomatically to work upon the fears of the Christians and force them to retire altogether. These negotiations lasted until the end of September; when the Sultan, disillusioned as to the intentions of the Christian army, again began hostilities.[2]

Meanwhile Francis had again set common prudence at nought and had gone over to the Sultan's camp.

After the disastrous repulse of the crusaders, he had sought out the Papal legate who was with the army, and requested leave to cross over to the Moslem lines and preach to the Sultan. The legate heard him incredulously. Was it not known that the Sultan had offered a golden ducat for the head of any Christian sent to him? He would not take upon himself any responsibility in the matter. It might be an inspiration from God or a temptation from the devil. Therefore he would neither encourage nor dissuade. Let Francis take his soul into his own hands; only let him behave himself

[1] II Celano, 30; *Leg. Maj.* XI. 3. See the accounts of the battle given by Jacques de Vitry and others, in Golubovich, op. cit. p. 7 *seq.* The battle was fought on 29 August.

[2] Golubovich, op. cit. p. 94.

so as not to bring shame on the Christian name.[1] That was sufficient for Francis. Eager to save the souls of the Sultan and the Moslem people or to die in the attempt for the honour of his Saviour, he at once set out, taking with him Brother Illuminato. At the start they came across two lambs on the road. The face of Francis brightened: he turned to Illuminato and exclaimed: "Put thy trust in the Lord, brother; for in us that saying is fulfilled: Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves". Perhaps Illuminato needed the consolation. Outside the Christian lines they were seized by Moslem soldiers, and, unable as they were to make themselves understood in the Moslem speech, they were roughly handled. Eventually as Francis persistently cried out: "Soldan, Soldan!" the soldiers took him to the Sultan's camp, and here Francis could converse with the officials in the *lingua franca*. He told them his purpose: he wished to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Sultan. Among the common soldiery in the Moslem lines this declaration might have been followed by a speedy death; but in the courtly circle of the Sultan's own camp, it was received with good-humoured tolerance. The courtier-Moslem was much of a rationalist and was not averse from debating the relative merits of the Gospel and the Koran as an intellectual pastime. He was, moreover, a curious mixture of ferocity and chivalry, even as were his Christian enemies. So Francis was brought into the presence of Melek-el-Kamil and expounded the Gospel of Christ.

Not unlikely the Sultan had consented to the audience as an interlude in the serious affairs of the day. But as he

[1] Cf. *Leg. Maj.* IX. 8; *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 481; Bernardi Thesaurarii, *Liber de Acquisitione Terræ Sanctæ*, in Golubovich, op. cit. p. 13 *seq.*

listened, he knew that here was more than a profession of belief, fanatical or conventional. Before the audience was over he felt himself drawn to this preacher; and in dismissing him for the day, ordered that he should be courteously provided for in the camp. It seems that there were several audiences;[1] and that the Sultan was so far won over to him that he asked him to remain at his court and dwell there. "Willingly," replied Francis, "if you and your people will be converted to Christ." And seeing that the Sultan was yet unconverted, Francis proposed a final test. "If you hesitate as to the merits of the law of Mahomet and the faith of Christ, command that a great fire be lighted, and I together with your priests, will enter into the fire that you may know which is the more worthy and true." To which Melek-el-Kamil replied that no priest of his would accept the challenge. "Then if you will promise for yourself and your people, to come to the worship of Christ if I come out of the fire unhurt, I will enter the fire alone," retorted Francis; "only," he added, "if I am burnt up, impute it to my sins, and if the Divine power protects me, acknowledge Christ to be true God and the Saviour of all."

The Sultan answered that he dared not accept the test for fear of a tumult amongst his people: yet he begged Francis not to cease from praying for him that he might come to know the true Faith. Then he wished to give Francis some token of his good-will. Would he not accept some precious gift if not for himself at least for the poor whom he might relieve in their needs? And so it seemed that the only result which was likely to come of further preaching would be a re-

[1] Cf. Jacques de Vitry, *Epist. de captione Damiatae*, in Golubovich, op. cit. p. 8: "*Cum multis diebus Saracenis verbum Domini praedicasset;*" *Historia Occidentalis* (Douai), p. 353; Golubovich, op. cit. pp. 9-10.

iterated offer of gifts. Francis had not come hither for that. Sorrowfully, therefore, he at length asked permission to return to the Christian camp, and at Melek-el-Kamil's orders, he was conducted back with courtesy.[1]

Doubtless when he again appeared in the Christian lines, many smiled at his simplicity; yet there were some who felt that the simple faith in which the enterprise had been undertaken was of more enduring value than any actual achievement. Perhaps these already suspected that for lack of this same faith the crusade was doomed to ignoble failure, even though Damietta might be taken.

Damietta did indeed fall before the winter was passed, thanks to the large reinforcements sent by the Pope; and on the feast of the Purification, 1220, the crusaders entered the city in solemn triumph. And then the discipline of the army

[1] I Celano, 57; *Leg. Maj.* IX. 8. *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 10. p. 4. Cf. Golubovich, op. cit. *ut supra*, p. 235, note 1. In *Verba fr. Illuminati* (Golubovich, op. cit. p. 36) there is a description of Francis' first audience with the Sultan which is quite consistent with Eastern manners. The Sultan, so the story runs, ordered a carpet to be spread which was covered with crosses. "If he treads on the crosses," said the Sultan, "I will accuse him of insulting his God; if he refuses to walk on it, I will accuse him of insulting me." Francis unhesitatingly walked across the carpet; and when taunted by the Sultan that he had trodden on the cross which he professed to adore, he replied: "You should know our Lord died between two thieves. We Christians have the true cross; the crosses of the thieves we have left to you, and these I am not ashamed to tread upon." The reply is quite in keeping with Francis' character. The *Verba fr. Illuminati*, are given by P. Golubovich from the Vatican MS. Ottob. lat. n. 522 of the XIV century, a collection of stories by a Minorite preacher. P. Golubovich remarks that the original source of these stories may yet be found. There is, however, no indication of them in existing authentic documents. See also the stories related in *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 483. Cf. ed. 1513, fol. 223 a.

In the sacristy of the Convento Sagro, Assisi, there is preserved a horn which is said to have been given by the Sultan to Francis and which the saint afterwards used to call people together when he was about to preach.

broke down completely, and the greater part succumbed to the seductive pleasures of the Egyptian spring; and the last decencies were openly disregarded.[1]

Francis remained with the army till the city was captured, striving to stem the flood of vice. At last in sheer despair of doing any good there, he turned his back on the crusade, and taking advantage of the spring sailings, crossed the sea to Acre.[2] And with him went a number of clerics from the suite of the crusading prelates, who renounced high preferments in the Church to enter the fraternity.[3]

At Acre, Francis was welcomed by Brother Elias, the Minister-Provincial of Syria, and with Elias was a novice, Brother Cæsar of Speyer, who had been a famous preacher of the Crusades and had to flee from his native Germany to escape the anger of the relatives of the men whom he had induced to take the cross. This Cæsar was, moreover, a learned theologian and withal a man of simple, sturdy piety, ready to lay down his life for a sacred cause.[4] He had gone with the Christian army to Syria and there had been received as a friar by Elias.

From Acre, Francis set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Palestine, his heart uplifted with a loving reverence for the earth which had been trodden by the feet of his Divine Master. Some say that in the camp of the Sultan

[1] "*Scordandosi i disagi e i pericoli della guerra, si diedero in braccio alla mollezza, alla voluttà, ed ai piaceri tutti che loro potevano ispirare la vicinanza della primavera, il clima e il bel cielo di Damiata.*" Michaud, Storia, lib. XII. in Golubovich, op. cit. p. 96.

[2] *L'éstoire de Éracles* in Golubovich, p. 14.

[3] Cf. Jacques de Vitry, loc. cit. p. 8.

[4] Eventually he died a martyr's death for his zeal for the Franciscan Rule, as some assert at the connivance of Brother Elias himself. Cf. Angelo Clareno, *Hist. VII Tribulat.* in Golubovich, pp. 118-19.

Kamil, he had met Kamil's brother Conradin, the Sultan of Damascus, who had given him a free pass to visit the shrines of the Holy Land, which freed him from paying the customary dues which the Moslem exacted from Christian pilgrims.[1] He also made a preaching tour of the Christian colonies in Syria, and gained many adherents to the fraternity, amongst whom was the prior of the Cathedral at Acre. It is said that near Antioch a community of Benedictine monks, won by his preaching, made a vow of absolute poverty and became Friars Minor.[2] But of these pilgrim journeys but little certain record is left us, and thus a chapter in the story of Francis over which one would willingly linger, comes to an abrupt conclusion.

Meanwhile, however, the missionary enterprise initiated at the Chapter of 1219, had already been consecrated with the martyr's blood. Five of the brethren sent to Morocco had been done to death in those parts, whilst Francis was still with the crusading army before Damietta. They were Brothers Berardo, Otho, Pietro, Accurso, and Adjuto. Setting out on their enterprise shortly after Francis had started on his, they had first gone to Seville in Spain, where the Moslem still ruled; and for an attempt to preach there, had been scourged and imprisoned and finally expelled that kingdom.

Thence they had passed over to Morocco. With a zeal which might well seem intemperate to men of less impulsive ardour, they not only preached in the streets but had even entered the mosques and denounced Mahomet there. Imprisoned and scourged though they were, their fervour was not to be restrained: in prison they attempted to convert their jailers. The Moslem, unwilling to proceed to extrem-

[1] Angelo Clareno, in Golubovich, p. 56; *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* iv. p. 482.

[2] *Conformit., ibid.* p. 483.

ities according to law, acceded to the request of the Infante Pedro of Portugal, who was then resident at the Sultan's Court, that these impetuous friars should be sent out of the country. Don Pedro thought thus to save their lives and probably also to prevent an outburst on the part of the populace against the Christians in the country.

But the five friars knew nothing of diplomacy and had not the temper to live and let live. Mahomet was in their eyes the enemy of Christ, and the souls of this people were rightful spoils for their Divine Redeemer. To go back upon their mission would be but a traitorous backsliding from their fealty to their Saviour. At the first opportunity they eluded their guard and returned to the city; then appeared again before the mosque, appealing to the people to renounce Mahomet.

Again they were seized and cast into jail and put to the torture. Whilst upon the rack, they were offered life and gifts if they would deny Christ and acknowledge Mahomet; but their only reply was to utter the praises of Christ and invite their torturers to worship Him. At length, finding all persuasions useless, the judges put the law into execution. The five friars were beheaded and their bodies cast outside the walls to be the food of dogs. And so they died for the Christ they loved, not wisely perhaps if we judge them by the ethics of a more wary world, but gloriously in the simplicity of their faith. Thus indeed Don Pedro, the Portuguese Infante, adjudged their martyrdom. Stealthily he had their bodies rescued and taken to Portugal, where with great reverence they were laid in the Church of the Canons Regular at Coimbra.[1]

Now amongst those who flocked to pray beside the mar-

[1] Cf. *Passio Sanct. martyrum frat. Berardi*, etc. in *Anal. Franc.* III. pp. 579-96; *ibid.* pp. 15-21; *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. pp. 322-3.

tyrs' relics was a young Canon Regular, who listening to the story of their martyrdom, burned to emulate their example. Not many days later he went to the Friars Minor who dwelt outside the city and begged them to give him the habit of their Order and send him to preach to the Moors: and gladly the friars welcomed him. That was how Anthony of Padua—as he came to be styled—joined the fraternity. The martyrs had not died in vain if only Anthony's coming were the result; as we shall yet see.

When Francis heard the news of the martyrdom he cried out in a transport of gratitude to heaven: "Now I can truly say I have five brothers". And in the days which were upon him the triumph of their simple faith was as balm to his spirit. He needed some such consolation; for the great sorrow of his life was now fast closing upon him.

He had returned to Acre, not it would seem without some foreboding of trouble. There he was met by a Brother Stephen, a lay brother, who had come from Italy, bringing a message from many of the brethren there, which begged Francis, if he were still alive, to come back at once and save his Order. The brother related how the two Vicars-General were imposing obligations upon the brethren at variance with the Rule Francis had given them, and how the brethren who refused to be bound of these new obligations were badly treated by the Vicars and even driven out of the Order. Brother Stephen himself had had to flee secretly without the knowledge of the Vicars. And he brought with him, in confirmation of his story, a copy of the new Constitutions which the Vicars had made at a Chapter they had held.

Francis was at table when the Constitutions were brought to him, and amongst the foods before him was flesh meat. In the Constitutions he read that the brethren were not

to quest for flesh meat not even on days which were not fasting-days: moreover they were to fast on Mondays as well as on the days prescribed in the Rule. Whereupon Francis turned to Peter Cathanii, who was with him. "Messer Peter, what shall we do?" he asked. "Ah, Messer Francis," replied Peter, "do as you think well, for authority is yours." "Then we will eat what is set before us according to the Gospel," said Francis.[1]

When the next boats sailed at the end of the summer, Francis returned to Italy.[2] He took with him Brothers Peter Cathanii, Elias and Cæsar of Speyer for he felt he had need of these men with their knowledge of affairs: and they were men in whom he had a great trust.

[1] Cf. *Chron. Jordani* in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 11, 12, p. 4. Angelus Claren. *Hist. VII Tribulat.* in Golubovich, op. cit. p. 56; *Exposit. super Regulam*, *ibid.* p. 57. Cf. Golubovich, pp. 126-8.

[2] The exact time of Francis' return to Italy is a matter of controversy. Golubovich (op. cit. p. 97) argues for March-April, 1221; Sabatier (*Vie de S. François*, p. 278), in the summer of 1220; Herman Fischer (*Der heilige Franziskus von Assisi während der Jahre* 1219-21, p. 20 *seq.*), in the early part of 1220.

The facts we have to guide us in fixing the date are these: Francis was at Damietta in February, 1220; and afterwards visited Syria and went about there. Celano evidently implies that Francis spent some time in Syria, journeying through the country: "*deinde Syriam deambulans*" (I Celano, xx. *in capite*). But Elias, who accompanied Francis back to Italy, was succeeded in the Provincialate of Syria by Luca di Puglia before 9 December, 1220. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. p. 6. Again it is noteworthy that the letter addressed by Honorius III to the Superiors of the Order on 22 September, 1220 (Sbaralea, op. cit. I. p. 6) is not addressed to Francis by name, as is usual in similar letters, but simply: *Dilectis filiis prioribus seu custodibus Minorum.* This, however, is hardly a conclusive argument. But we know that Peter Cathanii died at the Porziuncula on 10 March, 1221. Golubovich *assumes* that Peter must have returned to Italy before Francis; but Giordano da Giano, who relates these events in detail, says Francis took Peter, Elias, and Cæsar with him on his return (*Anal. Franc.* I. no. 14, p. 5). The probability, therefore, is that Francis returned in the September sailings of 1220.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REVOLT OF THE VICARS.

We must now go back upon the past eighteen months and review the course of events which had happened amongst the brethren in Italy.

Two incidents which followed almost immediately after the General Chapter of 1219 throw a clear, if reflected, light upon the controversy which had then arisen. On 11 June the Holy See issued commendatory letters to the brethren, designed to obtain for them the protection of the bishops in the various provinces into which they might be sent;[1] on 27 July, Cardinal Ugolino published his Constitutions[2] for the Poor Ladies, or as he styled them, the Poor Nuns of the Order of San Damiano.[3]

[1] Bull "*Cum dilecti*," in Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 2; Chron. XXIV. Gen., *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 14.

[2] Ugolino's Constitutions were dated "*Perusii apud monasterium S. Petri, VI Kal. Aug. a°* 1219". Cf. Bull "*Sacrosancta Romana Ecclesia*," of 9 Dec., 1219—Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 3. The full text of the Constitutions is found in the Bulls "*Cum omnis*" of 24 May, 1239 (Sbaralea, *ibid.* pp. 263-7) and "*Solet annuere*" of 13 November, 1245 (*ibid.* pp. 394-9): and with some modifications in the bull "*Cum omnis*" of 5 August, 1247 (*ibid.* pp. 476-83.) Cf. *The Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare*, Introduction, ii, pp. 11-31.

[3] "*Moniales pauperes*," "*Pauperes inclusæ Damianitæ*," "*Moniales ordinis S. Damiani*" were the varying styles used in the Papal bulls. (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. pp. 36, 37, 62, 207, etc.).

The acceptance by the brethren of the commendatory letter of Honorius III, was in distinct opposition to the will of Francis: it was one of those changes in the conduct of the fraternity to which he could never be brought to give his assent. At the end of his days he wrote in his Testament: "I firmly command by obedience all the brethren wherever they are that they dare not to seek any letter from the Roman Court, either by themselves or by any intermediary person, nor for a church nor for any other place, nor on pretext of teaching, nor on account of bodily persecution; but wherever they are not received, let them flee into another land to live in penance with the blessing of God".[1] After the failure of the missions in Germany in 1217, the question of asking the Pope to grant the brethren letters of protection had been mooted. Francis' reply was invariably a passionate refusal. "You Friars Minor you know not the will of God and will not allow me to convert the whole world as God wills," he retorted on one occasion; "for I wish by holy humility and reverence first to convert the prelates; and these when they see our holy life and our humble reverence towards them, will themselves ask you to preach and convert the people; and they will call the people to hear your preaching better than your privileges which will only lead you to pride. . . . For myself I wish only this privilege from the Lord that I may never have any privilege from man, save only the privilege to do reverence to all and to convert mankind through obedience to our holy Rule, more by example than by word."[2]

If you ask why Francis stood so steadfastly against a mere

[1] *Test. S. Franc.* in *Seraph. Legisl. Text.* p. 268; *Opuscula*, p. 80.

[2] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 50; *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. 471. Cf. Ubertino da Casale, in Erhle: *Archiv* III. p. 53.

precaution of apparently common prudence, the only answer is that Christ his Master had claimed no right or privilege for His disciples in this world, but had sent them forth shielded only with the Divine protection;[1] and Francis' loyalty bade him take the Gospel as literally as might be.

That first letter of Honorius III was the beginning of the policy of protection with which the Holy See ever after fostered the Franciscan movement. In May of the following year the Pope sent a further letter, couched in stronger terms, to the bishops of France, who were still hesitating as to the orthodoxy of the new Order.[2] Moreover it became the custom for some of the cardinals to give letters of their own, for the better reception of the brethren on their missionary journeys.[3]

Undoubtedly this policy was favoured by Cardinal Ugolino. As he regarded the matter, the brethren might indeed gain much merit for their own souls and perhaps edify the people, by patience and meekness under trials. On the other hand, many of them would fail under too great a trial; and too, through lack of this initial prudence, the Church in many parts would be deprived of the good example and preaching of the brethren. Francis' faith was heroic: but not all men can be asked to practise heroic virtue. The wind must be tempered to the shorn lamb. Moreover the Cardinal was a legalist, trained in the law; and he thought it only right that the brethren should show their credentials from the authority which sent them forth to preach. The fraternity needed this legal sanction and direction if it were to be of use to the

[1] Cf. Matt. x. 14, 23; Mark vi. 11; Luke ix. 5. It must be remembered that Francis took these and similar passages as a direct personal commission for himself and his brethren.

[2] Bull "*Pro dilectis filiis*," Sbaralea, *Bull.* i. p. 5. Cf. *Anal. Franc.* iii. p. 14, n. 9.

[3] 3 Soc. 66.

Church. Without such legal sanction they were in danger of becoming mere vagrants in the world: a dangerous thing for most men. This same thought made the Cardinal encourage a more definite organization than yet existed in the fraternity. He favoured the brethren living in larger houses where regular life of a more conventual character could be observed. Until now the dwelling-places of the brethren had been of the humblest sort; either hermitages partly fashioned out of rocky caves, as one finds to-day at Greccio, Monte Casale, the Celle near Cortona, and the Carceri near Assisi; or they were wattle huts or a poor man's cottage. Always they were designed for only a few friars; for Francis taught that his Lady Poverty could be rightly served only where the friars were few in number.[1] A conventual life, strictly so called, did not exist. The friar, though under obedience to a superior, was very much of a wanderer, alternating his missionary journeys with periods of retreat. "The itinerant minstrel of the Lord," was no bad description of him. But now those directing the fraternity favoured a greater stability of community life.[2] The first step in this more rigid organization was a decree obtained from Honorius III, ordaining that in future no friar should be received to profession till after a year's probation; that once professed, no friar should be allowed to pass over to another Order; and that no friar might wander about without letters of obedience from his minister.[3]

The decree was certainly reasonable enough. Even such an enthusiastic admirer of the brethren as Jacques de Vitry

[1] II Celano, 70.

[2] Cf. P. Hilarin Felder, *Histoire des Études*, p. 119: "*Toujours, c'était là encore la période de transition de la vie nomade à la stabilité*".

[3] Bull "*Cum secundum consilium*," of 22 September, 1220. Sbaralea, *Bull.* 1. p. 6.

foresaw danger in the lack of systematic training of the novices now that the friars were so numerous.[1] Unhappily the vicars did not confine themselves to such reasonable and necessary organization.

As we have seen, they enacted constitutions the tendency of which was to introduce that monastic observance against which Francis had protested at the Chapter as contrary to the simplicity of the friar's vocation. The mere addition of an extra fasting day and the restriction in the use of flesh meat, might not be much in themselves; but it is evident that they were but part of an attempt to change the proper character of the fraternity and supplant Francis' ideal of a literal gospel observance by a more rigid legalist asceticism founded on the customs of more ancient Orders. Not unlikely they had in view the Ugoline Constitutions for the Poor Ladies, and were influenced by them. These Constitutions are in fact a document of the first value in tracing the development of the entire Franciscan family at this period.

Briefly speaking, the Ugoline Constitutions reveal the legalist reformer endeavouring to capture the new religious enthusiasm evoked by Francis and to fasten it within the closest bonds of traditional asceticism. Upon the wings of that new fervour, perhaps, the writer of the Constitutions felt any burden might be borne. His ideal evidently was a monastic observance which would rival in its hardship and straitness the strictest of the ancient Rules.

[1] *Epistola "de captione Damiatæ,"* edited by Röhricht in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*. 16, p. 72: "*Hec autem religio valde periculosa nobis videtur, quod non solum perfecti, sed etiam juvenes et imperfecti qui sub conventuali disciplina aliquo tempore arctari et probari debuissent, per universum mundum bini et bini dividuntur*". This passage, however, is wanting in the text edited by Bongars. *Gesta Dei per Francos*, tom. I. pp. 1146-9 (cf. Golubovich, op. cit. p. 7).

These Constitutions presupposed the profession of the Benedictine Rule, but further prescribed perpetual abstinence, continual silence, and the law of enclosure. They were altogether lacking in that "sweet reasonableness" which breathes in the legislation of the great monastic founders; and certainly missed the liberty of spirit which animates the Rule of St. Benedict. They exhibit all the rigidity and harsh externalism of a rule meant to correct and guard against abuses, with none of the inspiring idealism which is the very life of a religious order. From the particular point of view of the Franciscan fraternity, the constitutions made no reference to that strict poverty which was the essential law of the Franciscan life, though, as a matter of fact, the Poor Ladies were enthusiasts for poverty.

Ugolino had been influenced in drawing up these Constitutions by the Cistercian customs;[1] it is not unlikely that they were in reality the work of a Cistercian monk, to which the Cardinal gave his authority and sanction. Perhaps had he given the drafting of them to one of the brethren, the Ugoline Constitutions would have been less foreign in spirit to the heart of Clare and the Sisters at San Damiano. As it was, to them the Constitutions was in truth "the great sorrow".[2]

It is doubtful whether the Cardinal regarded the Poor Ladies, at least those outside San Damiano, as allied to the fraternity. Most of the convents had been founded or reformed by himself in virtue of his legative powers and

[1] He acknowledges this in the bull, "*Licet relut agnus*," of 9 February, 1287 (cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 209). The first visitor of the Poor Ladies appointed by him was the Cistercian monk Ambrogio (cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 46; Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1219).

[2] Cozza-Luzzi, *S. Chiara di Assisi*, p. 34.

were in no sense under the jurisdiction of St. Clare. San Damiano was, of course, in a different position; but even Clare had received no formal Rule. She had vowed to live in poverty as the brethren did; beyond that she observed the Rule of the brethren as far as women might observe it. Her vow of poverty had been confirmed and protected by special privilege by Innocent III;[1] but the Cardinal held that this privilege was personal to herself and the sisters at San Damiano, and was not to be taken as an obligation binding upon other Poor Ladies.[2]

It is true that when in 1218 Ugolino obtained permission to found new convents, Honorius III reserved to the Holy See the ownership of the lands and chapels given for the use of the communities.[3] Thus at the beginning these new foundations did in fact observe corporate poverty, inasmuch as whatever property was set apart for their use, was not their own. Moreover, in their zeal for poverty the Poor Ladies were everywhere content with land barely sufficient —and frequently insufficient—to supply the most frugal necessities of life. So far their life was in accord with that worship of poverty which Francis had preached with such splendid devotion. Moreover, Ugolino in several instances took abbesses for his new communities from San Damiano, and thus brought them under the influence of the idealism which radiated from that sunlit sanctuary.

Nevertheless the convents of the Poor Ladies, except San Damiano, were not purely Franciscan in their origin; and perhaps it was for that reason that Francis never claimed

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 144.

[2] Cf. Letter, "*Angelis Gaudium*," which Ugolino as Gregory IX sent to Blessed Agnes of Prague, 11 May, 1238, Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. 242.

[3] Cf. Bull, "*Litteræ tuæ*," of 7 August, 1218, Sbaralea, *ibid.* p. 1.

jurisdiction over them in the same way as he did over San Damiano;[1] but Clare herself as the years went on was staunch in urging that they should all be allowed to observe absolute poverty, and be made akin to the fraternity if they so willed.[2] Probably "the great sorrow" with which Clare received the Ugoline Constitutions was not merely for the sisters who were directly affected by them, but for the whole fraternity: her keen intuition would tell her how the new ordinances would influence the brethren too. Indeed there can be little doubt that the Vicars were so influenced when they drew up the Constitutions which spread consternation amongst the true followers of Francis.

The disloyalty of the Vicars to the mind of Francis went near to breaking up the fraternity. Their Constitutions at once called forth an active opposition on the part of those who were imbued with the primitive spirit; and this opposition the Vicars, and the Ministers who sided with them, met with violent repression. "Not only were they [the opposition] afflicted with unjust penances, but as men of evil mind they were cast out from the community of the brethren . . . Many fleeing from fury, wandered about here and there, bewailing the absence of their pastor and guide."[3] Moreover, having

[1] Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1219) states that Francis *before going to the East* had given over the direction of all convents of Poor Ladies, except San Damiano, to Cardinal Ugolino; but there is no evidence that he ever regarded such convents, e.g. San Severino, as quite in the same relationship to him as San Damiano. It is certain that in some instances he appointed brethren to act as spiritual directors of the Poor Ladies elsewhere—e.g. he appointed Brother Roger to be the director of the Blessed Philippa at Todi (Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1236), but the close relationship of San Damiano with the fraternity seems to have been exceptional.

[2] *Vide* e.g. St. Clare's letters to Blessed Agnes of Prague, *Acta SS. Mart.* vol. I. pp. 505-7, transl. by Mrs. Balfour, *The Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare*, pp. 138-54.

[3] Angelo Clareno, *Hist. VII Tribulat.* Golubovich, p. 56. Cf. *Chron.*

broken the bond of loyalty which hitherto had kept the fraternity in subjection, the Ministers found themselves unable to hold the wayward spirits in restraint. Some openly threw off their obedience and went their own way.

Thus one brother, John de Compello, put himself at the head of a band of wandering zealots of the fanatical sort common at the time: they were all lepers, and of both sexes.[1] Another made himself a pilgrim's habit and went wandering about exhibiting himself as a fool for humility's sake.[2] At first on his return Francis hardly realized the mischief that had been done. He lingered a few days at Venice, whither the boat had brought him. He was suffering in body as well as in mind, for his journeys in the East had sorely tried his delicate health. One little comfort he had here. Walking in the marshes through the thickets, he came upon a multitude of birds singing gaily. Whereupon he said to the brother who was with him: "our sisters the birds are praising their Creator; let us go into the midst of them and chant our hours[3] to the Lord" and at their coming the birds were not disturbed or frightened. But finding the voices of the birds

Jordani, in *Anal. Franc.* I. n. 13, p. 4. . "*Eodem tempore fuit ultra mare pythonissa quaedam . . . tiedite redite quia per absentiam fratris Francisci ordo turbatur et scinditur et dissipatur. Et hoc verum fuit.*"

[1] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I n. 13, p. 4. Lempp's contention (*Frère Élie*, p. 42) that this movement was an attempt to organize the lay penitents of the Franciscan movement, can hardly be seriously considered. John de Compello has been identified with John de Capella, one of the first twelve companions (cf. *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 4; Sabatier, *Vie*, p. 270) but this is very doubtful. The only apparent connexion between the two names is the statement of Barth. of Pisa, that John de Capella died a leper. (*Conformat.*, in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 178). Cf. *Manuscrit de Leibnitz* in *Opuscules de Critique*, fasc. II. p. 49.

[2] II Celano, 32-33. He eventually returned to the order.

[3] "*Horæ canonicæ*," i.e. the office of the Breviary.

distracting, Francis after a time bade them be silent until he had fulfilled his debt to the Lord. Then when the office was said, Francis gave them a sign, and they again began to sing.[1]

On the homeward journey Francis found the fatigue too much for his weakness and had perforce to ride on an ass. Brother Leonard, who trudged along on foot over the hot ground, envied him this comfort, and became mentally unreasonable and ill-tempered. "In the world," said he to himself, "my people would not walk beside the Bernardone, and here am I compelled to trudge behind his son whilst he rides". Leonard was of a noble family in Assisi. To his astonishment hardly was the complaint shaped in his mind when Francis dismounted and turned to him, saying: "Take my place, brother; truly it is not becoming that I should ride whilst thou, who art of noble stock, should have to walk on foot". But Leonard, in utter confusion and penitence, cast himself at Francis' feet.[2] So with their primitive simplicity for their comforter, they went on until they came to Bologna; and here Francis had his first actual experience of the changes which had taken place.

On approaching the city he was informed that the brethren had built a large convent there; and hearing the description of it, Francis was smote to the heart. It appeared to him a sign manual of the betrayal of the vocation of the fraternity. Peter Stacia,[3] the provincial of Lombardy,[4] was himself a doctor of law of the University of

[1] *Leg. Maj.* VIII. 9; Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1220.

[2] II Celano, 31; *Leg. Maj.* XI. 8.

[3] He is also called Joannes della Schiaccia (*Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 440), Joannes de Sciaca (*Actus*, cap. 61); Joannes de Strachia and Petrus Joannes de Strachia (Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1216, 1220. Petrus Stacia is the name given him by Angelus Clarenus, *Hist. VI Tribulat*).

[4] Cf. Golubovich, *Series Provinciarum*, in *Arch. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. I. p. 3.

Bologna, and he had built the convent as a study-house for the brethren. Compared with the buildings hitherto used by the fraternity, the convent was spacious;[1] but the worst feature in the eyes of Francis was that the Provincial in some way claimed it as the property of the Order, or at least allowed it to appear that he did so. Thus he had openly violated the Rule on two essential points: he had departed from the absolute poverty in which the fraternity was founded, and he had set at nought that evangelical simplicity which was the other self of poverty. It would seem too that Peter Stacia had acted in deliberate disregard of the intentions of Francis, drawn on by the desire to emulate the Dominicans who had opened a school at Bologna in 1219, the year that Francis had gone to the East.[2] Francis knew Bologna and the temper of its schools. When he had sent Bernard da Quintavalle there some years previously it had been to bear witness in its midst to the simplicity of the Gospel-mind against the intellectual hardness and conceit bred in its schools, where law and the liberal arts were studied with an ostentatious disregard of theology and the study of Scripture. Probably Peter Stacia intended to include theology amongst the studies of the brethren; perhaps even to open a theological school, such as was already winning applause for the Dominicans.[3] But Francis had no desire for theology of that sort, in which intellectual reasoning was more evident than the heart-study of the Gospel. Still it was not now a question of the study of theology, but the

[1] Cf. Angelo Clareno, *op. cit.*; Hilarinus a Lucerna, *Histoire des Études*, p. 133, note 2.

[2] Cf. Jordanus de Saxonia, *De initiis Ord. Praedicat.*, in Quétif-Echard, *Scriptores Ord. Praedicat.* I. p. 18.

[3] Jacques de Vitry, *Historia Occidentalis* (Douai) p. 333.

more fundamental question of the character and purpose of the fraternity. Were the brethren to abide in their original poverty and simplicity? The new convent of Bologna was a direct negative: it was the announcement of a new spirit at variance with the spirit of that poverty which the brethren had vowed to serve.[1] That was the one clear fact which the heart of Francis grasped with piercing intuition.

In indignant sorrow Francis refused to enter the convent, but went and sought a lodging with the Friars Preachers. There he pondered upon this betrayal which confronted him. Such an evil example must be met with dire chastisement. Summoning Peter Stacia to his presence, he upbraided him with aiming at the destruction of the fraternity and called down upon him the curse of heaven; and he would have ordered all the brethren of the convent to do penance but that a Friar Preacher interceded for them. If they had done wrong, this friar urged, they had acted from lack of judgment, not from malice, and were willing to make reparation. So Francis stayed his hand, and only bade them immediately quit the convent: nor would he allow even some sick brethren who were there, to remain.[2] After that he continued his journey southwards, learning, as he went, all the sorrow that had come upon his brethren during his absence.

[1] Had Peter Stacia gone so far in violation of the Rule as to collect money for the building? I am inclined to think so. In the eleventh chapter of the Rule of 1221, Francis emphatic and painstaking regulation that the brethren shall not collect money for houses or places, evidently implies that the Rule had been violated in this respect. It is a passionate utterance which a mere possible danger would not have evoked, but only an actual betrayal. And that would account for the curse which Francis called down upon the minister and which he would never revoke.

[2] II Celano, 58; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 6; *Actus*, cap. 61; *Conformit.*, in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 440.

PRIMITIVE FRANCISCAN HERMITAGE
(Grotto of Soffiano)

Even amongst his earliest companions was found one at least who had fallen in with the new ways, Philip the Long, a man of undoubtedly holy life. He had been appointed Visitor of the Poor Ladies in succession to the Cistercian monk Ambrogio; and had procured letters of protection for them from the Holy See, to safeguard them against troublesome bishops.

Very quickly now the news of Francis' return was carried throughout the provinces of the peninsula and brought to the brethren who had fled to mountain hermitages and hidden places to escape the persecution of the dominant party. To these suffering ones his appearance was like the breaking of day after a night of dread.[1] Somehow the rumour had gone abroad that he was dead: possibly it was a rumour born of the sufferings and fears of the brethren in the absence of news; or it may have been a distorted echo of the martyrdom of the brethren in Morocco. But everywhere, as the news of his return was passed from place to place, a great cry of joy broke forth.[2]

Doubtless many of the persecuted brethren dreamed that now things would be again as they were before the Vicars had brought trouble into the fraternity. Francis, however, gauged the situation more accurately. A great betrayal had happened: but he was clearly aware that things could not be

[1] According to Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1220) Francis met Cardinal Ugolino at Bologna, and went with him to a Camaldulese monastery near Alvernia, where they passed some time in retreat. Upon this statement M. Sabatier builds the theory that the Cardinal purposely kept Francis out of the way whilst the ministers were carrying out the Cardinal's policy (*Vie de S. François*, pp. 277-8). But there is no authentic evidence that Francis went to Alvernia at this time; nor does it appear from the *Registri* that the Cardinal was at Bologna in 1220, though he was undoubtedly there in 1218, 1219, and 1221 (cf. H. Fischer, *Der heilige Franziskus*, p. 67).

[2] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 14, p. 5.

quite as they were before. Simplicity of faith and unity of purpose no longer held the brethren in an easy obedience. The dominant party at least were not satisfied with his guidance, and never would be: they were shielding themselves behind the patronage of those in high places. One conclusion was clear to his simple soul: the fraternity needed a ruler who would govern the recalcitrant brethren in a more masterly fashion than he himself could. It was not in him to act "the sergeant of the Lord" and coerce men; if the brethren would not follow him freely, he was not the leader for them.[1] Yet it was on his conscience to do what he could to save this child of his love, as the fraternity was to him. In his perplexity his thoughts turned to Cardinal Ugolino as the man whom God had destined to foster by his authority in the Church, this family of His. Straightway therefore he turned his steps towards Rome.[2] He avoided meeting the Vicars on the way:[3] his appeal was to the Holy See.

Arrived in the Eternal City, Francis went to the Lateran palace and sat down upon the ground outside the door of the Pope's chamber to await his coming out, too humble to seek admittance. When at length the Pope came forth, Francis greeted him: "Father Pope, God give thee peace!" and the Pontiff replied: "God bless thee, my son"; and awaited his request. "My lord," said Francis, "because you are so great and busy with affairs of great movement, the poor cannot often have access to you, nor can they speak with you as often as there is need." And when Honorius reminded him that there

[1] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. n. 14, p. 5.

[2] Honorius III was in Rome from November, 1220, till April, 1222. Previously to this he had been at Orvieto all the summer and early autumn of 1220, save for a journey to Mantua at the end of July. Cf. *Mon. Germ. Hist.* tom. I. p. 83 *seq.*

[3] *Spec. Perfect.* chap. 71.

were cardinals and bishops to whom he could have recourse. Francis exclaimed: "you have given me many popes; I beseech you give me one with whom as necessity arises I may speak and seek counsel in your stead concerning the affairs of my Order". "Whom do you wish that I should give thee, my son?" asked the Pope. "Give me," said Francis, "the lord Cardinal of Ostia." And thus, according to one witness, Cardinal Ugolino became Protector of the fraternity at the Roman Court.[1]

But others say that Francis first sought out Cardinal Ugolino and spoke to him his trouble; and that the next morning the Cardinal took Francis with him to the Papal presence and bade him speak out before the Pope and cardinals what was in his mind: then afterwards it was that Francis had private audience with the Pontiff and proffered his petition that Cardinal Ugolino should be the ruler of the brethren as the Pope's vicegerent.[2]

However this may be, from this time the Cardinal became the constant adviser of Francis and his "apostolic lord";[3] and it was his master-mind that directed the organization of the fraternity.

His first acts were to compel John de Compello to disband his wandering community and return to his obedience, and to revoke the "letters of defence" granted to the Poor Ladies. This latter action is significant of the spirit in which he assumed his new office. As the supreme arbiter in the fraternity he consistently endeavoured to meet the

[1] *Chron. Jordani, ut supra.*

[2] II Celano, 25; 3 Soc. 64-5. Cf. I Celano, 100. The point of agreement between the two narratives is found in 3 Soc. 65. Giordano evidently relates the final episode in this negotiation. Ugolino was in Rome in the winter of 1220-1.

[3] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 23: "*Dominus et Apostolicus noster*".

wishes of Francis in as far as he could do so, having regard to what he considered the needful organization of the Order. He himself, as we have seen, was not an idealist but a man of affairs; yet there was that persistent element of mysticism in his character which drew him to Francis more closely than many of the brethren were drawn. To him the ideas of Francis were never merely unpractical ideas but the inspiration which he sought to bring within the bounds of the practicable: and with infinite patience he set himself to bridge over the gulf which was widening between the mind of the founder and many of the new leaders of the brethren. Let justice be done to his memory. Not always did he see as St. Francis saw: yet he never deliberately offended against the trust Francis put in him.

Francis did not leave Rome till he and the Cardinal had arrived at an understanding as to the course to be taken in regard to the fraternity. Peter Cathanii was reinstated at the Porziuncola as vicar[1] to administer the ordinary affairs of the brethren, whilst Francis was to concern himself with a revision of the Rule such as was needed to bring peace and order into the disturbance. The revision was to incorporate the experience which had been gained as to the government of the brethren.

Not unlikely too the matter of the "letters of defence" led to a discussion of the relations between the brethren and the Poor Ladies, and that the Cardinal then recognized the distinct privileges attaching to San Damiano; whilst at the

[1] It seems certain that the appointment of Peter Cathanii as vicar referred to in II Celano, 143, and *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 39, refers to an earlier period, at a time when Francis was suffering from his recurring sicknesses. Both authors say distinctly that it happened a few years after Francis' conversion—"*paucis annis elapsis post conversionem suam*".

same time he obtained Francis' consent to brethren being appointed directors of other convents.[1] And, as I incline to think, one other weighty subject was then broached by the Cardinal, the organization of a new fraternity of lay-penitents for those men and women, and they were a great multitude, who had attached themselves to the brethren as informal followers of the gospel of poverty.

Meanwhile messengers were sent to all the provinces of the Order to call the brethren to attend a general Chapter at the following Pentecost. But before the Chapter met Peter Cathanii died and Brother Elias, the late Minister-Provincial of Syria, was appointed in his stead. Peter died on 10 March, 1221.[2] One wonders how things might have

[1] According to Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1224) Francis in 1224 wrote a Rule for the Poor Ladies. But there is no evidence of any such rule except the *Formula Vitae* referred to by Gregory IX in his bull *Angelis gaudium*, of 11 May, 1238 (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 242). This *Formula Vitae* is generally supposed to be contained in the sixth chapter of the Rule of St. Clare, approved by Innocent IV on 9 August, 1253 (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. pp. 671-8; *Seraph Legislat. Text.* p. 46 *seq.*).

The probability is that Francis accepted the Ugoline Constitutions for the sisters at San Damiano, except as they allowed property. Certainly they were observed at San Damiano even in St. Francis' lifetime, for he modified the rigidity of the fasts in favour of the weaker sisters (*vide Epistola III S. Clarae ad B. Agnet. Bohem.*, *Acta SS.* Mart. tom. VII. p. 507). Moreover in the eventual Rule of St. Clare we find the Ugoline prescriptions of enclosure, perpetual fast, and silence maintained.

[2] So reads the ancient inscription on the wall of the Porziuncola: "*anno Dni MCCXXI id Martii corpus fr. P. Catanii qui hic requiescit migravit ad Dominum*". According to Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 30, Peter died in 1224; Papini (Storia di San Francesco, I. p. 187) interprets the above inscription as 10 March, 1222, on the ground that the common mediaeval mode of computation reckoned the beginning of the year from 25 March. But this is very uncertain. Moreover it was evident from Giordano da Giano's account of the Chapter of 1221, that Elias was then the virtual superior of the Order (*Chron. Jordani*, no. 17, in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 6).

gone with the brethren in the next few years had he lived to stand between Francis and the dissident ministers, with his experience and loyalty: for he had governed the brethren at the Porziuncola for many years in the absence of Francis, except for that momentous absence in the East. He, too, like Cardinal Ugolino, was aware of the difficulty of maintaining a large multitude in the simplicity of the primitive days;[1] yet like the Cardinal, never lost his essential faith in Francis. But, as we have said, he died before the Chapter met.

[1] II Celano, 67.

CHAPTER V.

BROTHER ELIAS ASSUMES THE GOVERNMENT.

As one stands to-day in the plain facing Assisi and looks towards the city, the feature which most persistently holds the eye is not the mediaeval fortress crowning the hill nor anything amidst the cluster of bell-towers which lie beneath the hill's brow, but the great convent to the left where the mountain slopes steeply down to the river Tescio. Built upon a long line of great towering arches, because of the slope of the hill, the Sagro Convento at a distance looks more like a feudal fortress than a religious house. As you gaze upon it your thoughts turn for comparison to the fortress-churches, such as that of Durham, built and held by priest-soldiers, doughty men in Church and State. No matter how often you stand to gaze upon the city, nor with what intention, invariably that great convent-basilica, gleaming white against the dark greyish hills, draws your eye to itself: and if you know and love Franciscan legend, a complexity of emotion will as invariably distract you as you gaze. You will remember how that gleaming convent symbolized to many of the followers of Francis a great betrayal; how to others it seemed the appropriate expression of the world's homage to a great and well-loved saint. Perhaps in your own heart both sentiments will call for acknowledgment; you will be glad that the world gave of its magnificence and its noblest art in the building of a shrine which was to hold the body of him who deserved the world's best: and yet inconsistently you will begrudge the world its share in him who loved poverty and nature more than wealth and art. And perhaps in the consciousness of your own complex

feeling you will judge Brother Elias less harshly than some have judged him, and with a greater truth. For this vast pile of buildings reared under the supervision of Brother Elias, who became Vicar-General of the Order after the death of Peter Cathanii, is, in a sense, a monument to his genius and the expression of his character: though not altogether.[1] Beyond the confines of Umbria, close to the city of Cortona is the convent of the Celle, nestling lily-of-the-valley-wise beside a running stream at the base of a ravine. That, too, was built by Elias; and the low narrow building, wherein a tall man can hardly stand upright, reveals another cast of character.[2] Yet more or less rightly, the Sagro Convento has been taken to express the mind and life-purpose of the man who had now become the administrator of the fraternity. The Celle of Cortona represent only a transient, unfulfilled emotion: the Assisian Convent and Basilica stand for the man.

It is at once a great achievement and a failure. In itself it is so subtly woven of gracefulness and strength; laughing to scorn, as it does, the hindrances which the site first put in the way of its construction[3] and rising from the declivities

[1] Whether it was Elias or Gregory IX who initiated the scheme to build the great church, we cannot say. It is certain, however, that Gregory IX approved the scheme and commissioned Elias to carry it out. (*Vide* Bull, *Recolentes*, in Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 40.) The Sagro Convento itself was built to be a papal residence when the Popes were sojourning at Assisi, as well as a residence for friars.

[2] Salimbene nevertheless blames him for choosing so delightful a spot to dwell in. Op. cit. p. 104.

[3] The Colle d'Inferno on which the convent stands was separated from the city by a deep ravine; and the underground tomb had to be hewn out of solid rock. Early prints still show the city and convent thus separated; and M. Sabatier is of opinion that one gained admittance to the convent by means of two drawbridges thrown across the ravine which would give a still

in beauteous freedom. Truly a noble example of art; yet lacking the supreme glory of art! Did it but show in its superb strength some feeling for the sublime unworldliness which it professes to honour, it would have been a perfectly congruous expression of the world's homage. But the building conveys no such feeling; it reveals no aspiration towards what itself is not. It is essentially self-contained, demanding attention not for what it is not, but for what it is. It makes no humble confession of the greater glory of him whose body it enshrines; rather it claims his glory as an appanage of its own. And so the Sagro Convento—perfect in most things that make for perfection in art—bears a mark of insincerity and vanity; and whilst its beauteous strength dominates your senses, your soul is apt to be depressed: a sense of tragedy falls upon you—at first you hardly know why.

Much the same complexity of feeling and the same final emotion comes to one in looking back upon Elias himself.[1]

greater similarity to a fortress. Cf. Selincourt, *Homes of the First Franciscans*, p. 22, n. 2.

[1] For the story of Brother Elias, cf. P. Affò, *Vita di frate Elia*; Ed. Lempp, *Frère Elie de Cortone*; Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, p. 106 *seq. et alibi*. Unfortunately the materials for the story of Elias are not abundant, and one has to take the personal opinions of his contemporaries regarding him with due allowance for the strong feeling he excited amongst both friends and adversaries. The early chroniclers of the Order, from a comprehensible delicacy, avoided mentioning him except with the briefest references: and so, though the main outlines of his character and policy stand out clearly in history, there is a lack of detail, which leaves much scope for subjective theories concerning his motives and even the details of his story. There has been much speculation as to the date and place of Elias' birth. According to P. Affò he was born at Beviglia a short distance from Assisi. In the earliest chronicles he is simply styled Brother Elias without further designation; the Chron. XXIV. Gen. (*Anal. Franc.* III. p. 249) is the first to style him *Frater Helias de Assisio*; by which appellation he was known until the seventeenth century, when the custom arose of calling him Elias of Cortona, from his place of sepulture.

There is a certain fascination in the broad sweep of his ambition, in the strength of purpose which made him, the son of an artisan, become the trusted counsellor and ambassador of pope and emperor and the virtual ruler of the citizens of Cortona. He went far towards making the Franciscan Order a world-power, throwing its influence into the whirl of politics [1] and into the intellectual life of the rising universities [2] and into the mission-fields of Moslem territory.[3]

He was undoubtedly a man of intellectual culture. He had studied at the University of Bologna, and had acquired not merely the legal knowledge necessary to practise as a notary, but a taste for the arts; and if tradition be true, he was even attracted to the mysteries of the alchemist.[4] And

An inscription on his tomb in the Church of San Francesco, Cortona, in the sixteenth century, described him as "Helias Coppi di Cortona". Cf. *Anon. Corton.* pp. 36 and 75, in Lempp, p. 36, n. 3. Salimbene, who was received into the Order by Elias in 1238, says his father came from Castel Britti in the territory of Bologna and his mother from Assisi; he further tells us that Elias was styled Bonusbaro or Bombarone. Cf. *Mon. Germ. Hist.* xxxii, pars i, p. 96.

[1] e.g. he sent Haymo of Faversham to Nicea to negotiate for the reunion of the Greek and Latin churches (Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1232-33; Eccleston [ed. Little], p. 35); he intervened between belligerent Italian parties in the cause of peace (cf. Lempp, p. 107; Appendice II. 2). He himself acted as ambassador of Gregory IX in negotiating with Frederic II (cf. Salimbene, op. cit. p. 98). See also Huillard-Breholles, *Hist. Diplom.* v. pars I. p. 346.

[2] Eccleston [ed. Little], pp. 35, 62. *Vide* Salimbene's famous dictum: "*Hoc solum habuit bonum fr. Helias quia ordinem fr. minorum ad studium theologiae promovit*" (op. cit. p. 104).

[3] He sent missionaries to Georgia, Damascus, Bagdad, Morocco, Tunis, and Aleppo. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. pp. 93, 100, 102, 106, 155, etc. Cf. Golubovich, op. cit. p. 113-4.

[4] Cf. Eccleston, p. 36; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 217 and p. 695. Matthew of Paris (*Chron.* ad an. 1239) says Elias was a renowned preacher. Several works on alchemy have been attributed to him, but they probably belong to the alchemist, Elias Cantussa. Cf. Salimbene, op. cit. p. 160; Lempp, p. 121; Golubovich, op. cit. 116-7.

not only had he a rare mental ability, but in his bearing with others he could be gracious in a large and magnificent way, and he had the gift of winning men's confidence and attaching them to his person. But here perhaps one discovers his weakness. For those who gained his goodwill he had an abundant kindness which showed itself in frequent attentions and timely service; but those who withstood him he crushed, when he could, with no hesitation; and those who were useless to him he passed by with indifference. He ruthlessly scourged and imprisoned those who protested against his policy after Francis' death, even though they had been the special friends of Francis:[1] and as the years went on he developed an uncontrollable temper;[2] he could brook no opposition. When his purposes were thwarted he pitted himself in violence first against the brethren who withstood him; then against the Pope who censured him. Finally, after being drawn into the Imperial service and leading the emperor's embassies, he retired into comparative seclusion in the city of Cortona where the people worshipped him: and though an outcast from the Order and excommunicated by the Church, he spent his last years building a large church under the title of St. Francis, in which he himself was eventually buried: and to-day that church still stands in Cortona bearing witness to a life's failure: and the atmosphere of failure is in the place, so cold and spiritless it stands. But down in the ravine, the lowly Celle is still alive with fragrant inspiration.

In judging Elias one must never forget the Celle, even though he himself at the last seems to have despised it.

[1] Cf. Eccleston [ed. Little], p. 36; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 89 *seq.*; Angelo Clareno, *Hist. VII Trib.* in Golubovich, op. cit. pp. 118-9.

[2] Cf. Eccleston, p. 84. Salimbene, op. cit. p. 104 *seq.*

Truly a complex character was this man and not to be lightly judged: one predestined by his weakness to fail and by his strength to come very near to positive greatness.

One would wonder what could have induced Elias to become a Friar Minor, did not one remember the humble Celle. Undoubtedly he had in him some germ of heroic self-denial; and if his graciousness was apt to degenerate into patronage, yet he was not without sincere emotions of attachment, as is evident from the letter he wrote to Gregory of Naples, the Minister of France, in which he announced the death of Francis.[1] Doubtless it was the evidences of these qualities, joined with his marked business capacity, which won Francis' confidence. That the appointment of Elias to be Vicar-General was due to the suggestion of Cardinal Ugolino is not unlikely: yet it is certain that Francis gave to Elias, if not an intimate affection, which we may doubt, at least a high reverence;[2] and I do not question that the selection of Elias as vicar was in harmony with Francis' own wish. This we know, that he had chosen him as one of his companions on his return from Syria, together with Peter Cathanii and Cæsar of Speyer, both of whom were Francis' confidants in his time of trouble.[3] In truth it may have seemed to both Francis and the Cardinal, that Elias with his personal austerity and graciousness, his zeal and ability, was the desired peacemaker between the two parties in the fraternity: and to the Cardinal, Elias' thoughtful solicitude for Francis in his bodily weakness would be an additional re-

[1] Cf. *Acta SS.* Octob. II. p. 668.

[2] There is more than a courtier's flattery or a *littérateur's* fine phrase in Celano's saying: "*frater Helias quem loco matris eleverit sibi*," etc. (I Celano, 98). Tradition as well as history shows that Francis held Elias in respect, even though he came to suspect his policy, and detect his weakness.

[3] Cæsar of Speyer assisted Francis to revise the Rule. *Vide infra*, p. 312.

commendation.[1] Yet it was a sad day for the brethren when Elias became vicar. In him the spirit of secularism, sullenly clamouring for recognition since the Chapter of 1217, developed a Titanic force within the fraternity which his ability wrested in large measure from its original purpose. He gave the brethren place and power in the world; his genius gained for them political and ecclesiastical consideration; he might have made them even more than he did, a vast political organism, but that the primitive instinct of the fraternity proved too strong for him and rebelled and at last overwhelmed him. Even then he was not altogether overcome; and in his self-chosen seclusion in Cortona, when his disappointed days were drawing to a close, he perhaps found some cynical satisfaction in the thought that those who had wrought his fall could not escape from the legacy he had left them, but must accept it even though some of them might groan at the gift.

All this eventual tragedy is as yet to come. At the time of his appointment as Vicar, most of the brethren hoped that he would be Francis' staff in his declining health and the comfort of the brethren.

The general Chapter assembled at the Porziuncola in the closing days of May, 1221:[2] three thousand brethren including the novices, it is reckoned, were present.[3] Cardinal Ugolino was in the north of the peninsula and could not attend: Cardinal Rainerio, governor of the duchy of Spoleto, therefore presided. On the opening day a bishop sang the Mass. Francis assisted as deacon and afterwards preached,

[1] The legends prove that Elias showed an anxious care for Francis' physical health. Cf. 1 Celano, 98, 105; *Spec. Perfect.* cap 115; *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* 1 no. 17, p. 6.

[2] Pentecost fell in 1221 on 30 May.

[3] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* 1, no. 16, p. 6.

taking for his text the words of the Psalmist, "Blessed be the Lord, my God, who teacheth my hands to fight:"[1] a fitting text surely for the occasion.

Francis met the Chapter with the purpose of reasserting the primitive vocation of the fraternity. Upon the advice of Cardinal Ugolino, he had re-written the Rule with the assistance of Brother Cæsar of Speyer. This revised Rule he now submitted to the Chapter for its acceptance. If the dissident brethren had expected any modification of the original programme of the fraternity, they were now much disappointed. The primitive Rule was maintained intact: but it was amplified by the addition of certain capitular decrees and papal enactments and by a number of admonitions with which Francis sought to strengthen the brethren in the life he would have them live.[2] Such additional precepts which the revised Rule contained concerning poverty and the simplicity of Gospel observance, did but emphasize the manner of life of the first days and were all in the spirit of the primitive Rule. Thus the brethren were forbidden to meddle in the temporal affairs of the novices or to receive any of their goods except in cases of real necessity, when they might accept a share "like other poor";[3] the precept of manual labour remained, but

[1] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. The text is from Psalm CXLIII. 1 (Vulgate).

[2] *Vide infra*, Appendix I, p. 465 That Francis was accustomed to submit a draft of his proposed legislation to the General Chapters is certain (cf. *Epistola* III. in *Opuscula*, p. 109; II Celano, 128). We may take it therefore that the revised Rule was submitted to the General Chapter at least in rough draft. It is, however, not unlikely that Cæsar of Speyer gave it a more literary finishing, and added the quotations from Scripture and the Fathers, after the Chapter, with a view to submitting the Rule to the Holy See for approbation. Cæsar remained for nearly three months "in the valley of Spoleto" after the Chapter. Cf. *Chron. Jordani, Anal. Franc.* I. no 19. p. 8.

[3] Regula I. cap. 2.

to emphasize the menial character of the service the brethren should perform, they were forbidden to be chamberlains or cellarers or overseers in the houses of others; nor might they accept any employment which would give rise to scandal or be injurious to their souls.[1] Whoever came to be received into the fraternity, be he friend or foe, thief or robber, is to be received kindly and made welcome.[2] The brethren must avoid appearing "sad and gloomy like hypocrites," but they "must bear themselves as joyful and merry and becomingly gracious".[3] They are to confess their sins if possible to a priest of the Order, but if this be not possible, to some other priest; and if a priest is not at hand they shall confess to a brother who is not a priest, though afterwards they must seek absolution from a priest.[4] These regulations were not new but had already been imposed in former Chapters:[5] and so probably were the declarations that no brother should ride on horseback except in case of necessity, and that beasts of burden were not to be kept in the places where the brethren reside:[6] also that no brother should preach without licence from his minister.[7] Probably too the enactments concerning missons to the infidels were but a repetition of a rule made at the Chapter of 1219.[8] But there were other precepts which it seems evident arose out of the trouble of the past two years. Thus, no brother is allowed to receive vows of obedience from any woman;[9] the ministers are forbidden to assume the title of prior.[10] Twice the revised Rule asserts "the liberty of the Gospel" in regard to the food of the brethren: "they may eat of all foods which are placed before them, according to the Gospel"; and again, "whensoever necessity shall

[1] cap. 7. [2] *ibid.* [3] Regula I. cap. 7. [4] cap. 20.
[5] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 66: *Actus*, cap. 29: II Celano, 128; *ibid*, 175.
[6] Regula I. cap. 15. [7] cap. 17. [8] cap. 16. [9] cap. 12. [10] cap. 6.

arise, it is lawful for all the brothers, wherever they may be, to eat of all foods that men may eat".[1]

One regulation recalls the treatment meted out by the dissident ministers to the brethren who had opposed them in Francis' absence in the East: "If one of the ministers," says the Rule, "shall command any of the brothers anything contrary to our life or against his soul, the brother is not bound to obey him, because that is not obedience in which a fault or sin is committed."

Moreover, the ministers "who walk according to the flesh and not according to the spirit" are to be admonished by the brethren and if they do not amend, they are to be reported to the General Chapter.[2]

In the regulations forbidding the collection of money "for certain houses or places" one hears an echo of the scandal at Bologna.[3] Finally the conclusion of the Rule reiterates Francis' protest at the preceding General Chapter: "On the part of Almighty God and of the Lord Pope and by obedience, I, Brother Francis, strictly command and enjoin that no one take away from these things that are written in this life or add anything written to it over and above: and that the brethren have no other Rule".[4]

The revised Rule was not a treaty of peace: it was a challenge thrown down to those who would change the vocation of the fraternity; and as such it was taken by the dissident ministers. It is evident they had no intention of

[1] cap. 3, 9. [2] cap. 5. [3] Regula 1. cap. 8.

[4] The insertion of the words "and of the Lord Pope" may merely mean that Francis was enjoining the observance of the Rule in virtue of the authority given him by the Pope Innocent III, when the primitive Rule was approved. But it may be that the phrase was inserted with a view to submitting the Rule for formal approbation either to the Cardinal Protector, the Pope's representative, or directly to the Holy See.

observing it. The legal-minded amongst them held that until the Rule was formally sanctioned by the Holy See, Francis had no authority to impose it and could not therefore bind the brethren in conscience to abide by it.[1]

The Rule in fact hit them hardly. One minister came to Francis and asked him what was meant by the words: "When the brothers go about through the world, let them carry nothing by the way, neither bag nor purse nor bread," etc.[2] Francis unflinchingly replied: "I will have them understood thus: the brethren must have nothing besides their habit, cord and breeches, and as it is said in the Rule, those who are compelled by necessity, may have shoes". "What then shall I do?" asked the minister thinking of his portable library; "for I have many books the which are valued at fifty pounds." Francis exclaimed: "Brother, I must not and cannot go against my conscience and the profession of the holy Gospel which we have promised to observe". At this the minister grew very sad. Francis continued passionately: "O you brethren who wish to be called Friars Minor by the people and to appear to them observers of the Gospel and yet in fact would have your treasure-chests! But I am not going to lose the Book of the Gospel for the sake of your books. Do as you will; but never shall my permission be made a snare to the brethren."[3] That "Do as you will"

[1] *Vide infra*, p. 380. The question as to how far Francis could legislate for the brethren apart from the consent of the ministers continued to be debated until 1230, when Gregory IX in the bull *Quo elongati* (cf. Sbaralea, *Bull* I. pp. 68-70) declared that the brethren were not held by *obedience* to obey regulations made by Francis without the consent of the ministers, that is, the General Chapter. That was of course a correct legal view. But Gregory added that the brethren should in every way be ready to conform themselves to Francis' reasonable intentions and holy wishes.

[2] Regula I. cap. 14.

[3] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 3; II Celano, 62; *Scripta F. Leonis, Doc. Antiqua,*

became very much the despairing cry of Francis in the face of the continued opposition of the dissident ministers. He could not coerce them to follow his lead; he could only go on bearing witness to the truth which he held to have been given him by Christ Himself. Let those walk with him who would; for the others he disclaimed responsibility. These on their part at once set to work against the Rule; not as yet clamorously but nevertheless persistently. Cardinal Ugolino was appealed to. To a large extent he was in sympathy with them, only he would not have them openly and truculently offend Francis. With a statesman's acumen he sought to give effect to what he considered their reasonable demands whilst yet keeping intact the essential principles of the Rule. Thus in the matter of the house at Bologna, he publicly declared that the building belonged to the Holy See and was not the property of the brethren; and upon this condition induced Francis to consent that the brethren should return to it and live there.[1]

There can be no doubt that Brother Elias was a consenting party to the opposition excited by Francis' reassertion of the primitive Rule and his literal adhesion to it. But whilst others boldly and with less reverence uttered their complaints and declared their intentions, Elias had recourse to a more subtle diplomacy. In truth he feared to offend Francis. Something in his acknowledged leader—perhaps the holiness of the saint, perhaps the very fearlessness of the man, maybe both qualities—daunted him. Elias's policy, grounded at

ed. Lemmens, pars I. pp. 86-7. Cf. Hilarin de Lucerna, *Historische Studien*, pp. 87-91.

[1] The Cardinal was in Bologna in the beginning of August, 1221, when he officiated at the funeral of S. Dominic. *Acta SS.*, August I. p. 376. It was probably about this time that he made this public declaration to the citizens of Bologna.

least in part in reverence for Francis, was to gain his confidence and be the friend. His reasoning went wholly with the dissident ministers but his heart was yet held by a certain reverential affection for him whose vicar he was. Moreover it may be doubted whether Elias altogether approved of the independence of the ministers. It was not in his character to tolerate a divided authority : by instinct he was the autocrat; and though he might go some way with the ministers in their demands, he himself would be the master, as the ministers were to learn to their cost in the days to come.[1] Elias's policy, therefore, was to temper the more violent clamours of the dissidents and to work such changes as he thought well under the authority of the Cardinal Protector and with a certain deference to Francis' own will. And so it came about that this tragedy which was testing the vitality of the Order, was less apparent to the multitude of the brethren at the time than it is to us who look back. As a body they were hardly aware of the clashing of elemental purposes which was taking place. They knew that things were changing in this or that detail of government and that in some things the primitive simplicity was giving way to what they considered the demand of circumstance. But the surface of their life was but little ruffled. Such betrayals of principle which some of the brethren were guilty of, hardly affected the brethren as a whole. They were still a joyous company of God's troubadours : the original idealism was perhaps somewhat abated, but enough of it remained to give them a marked distinction of character. The exuberant vitality of souls set free was still theirs ; they rejoiced in their poverty and were avid for

[1] Cf. Eccleston [ed. Little], pp. 79, 98; Salimbene (loc. cit. p. 105) says "*Frequenter mutabat ministros ne nimis radicati fortius insurgerent contra ipsum*".

adventure for Christ's sake. Perhaps with most of them Francis was becoming more of the saint and less of the leader; but that only gave them a greater pride in their vocation. One who looked back upon these days with wistful reminiscence wrote in his chronicle: "Who can express the charity, patience, humility and obedience, and the fraternal merriment there was amongst the brethren at that time?"[1]

Many of the brethren remembered this General Chapter not because of the disputes concerning the Rule but because of the adventure which marked its close. The Chapter had lasted seven days and was about to disperse when Francis bethought him that no provision had been made to send brethren to Germany. Accordingly the brethren were recalled. Unable himself to address them because the fatigues of the past week had utterly broken down his strength and he could hardly speak, Francis sat on the ground and bade Brother Elias address the assembly and call for volunteers to undertake the new mission. Elias thus explained the intention of Francis: "Brothers, our brother says that there is a certain country, Germany, where dwell devout Christians, who as you know often pass through our country, with long staves in their hands and wearing great boots; and they sing the praises of God and the saints as they go along, perspiring in the heat, to visit the tombs of the Apostles. But because when the brethren were sent to them once before they were treated badly, our brother does not wish to compel any brother to go thither again. Yet if any inspired by zeal for God and souls, be willing to go, he will give them a like obedience, nay, a more willing obedience, than he gives to those who go to the infidels beyond the seas. Let those who are willing

[1] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I. no. 16, p. 6.

stand up and draw apart." At once ninety brethren arose "offering themselves to death"; so great was the terror that the Germans had struck into the hearts of the brethren by their treatment of the first mission.

There was one brother, however, an Umbrian by birth, who was sent somewhat unwillingly, yet happily as it turned out. Having listened to the story of the martyrs of Morocco, he was bewailing his misfortune in not knowing any of them personally. Seeing now the ninety brethren draw apart, he looked at them with reverence and with a sense of satisfaction that in them he was gazing upon martyrs that were to be: for of their fate he had no doubt. Since his infancy he had been taught to pray that God would shield his faith from the heresies of the Lombards and his body from the ferocity of the Germans. But he was not content to look upon the martyrs from a distance: he wanted to know each one personally so that in after times he might claim acquaintance with them. He therefore rose up and went over to them and began asking each his name and birthplace.

Now amongst them was one, a Fra Palmerio, a native of Apulia. When asked his name, he replied: "My name is Palmerio;" then seizing his questioner, he added: "And since you are here, you too are one of us and must go with us". "Not so," replied the other; "I am not one of you nor have I any desire to go with you." But Palmerio held him fast whilst the other brethren were being nominated for the different provinces. In vain the captive brother protested, until he consented to leave his destiny to the decision of Brother Elias. But when Elias asked him if he wished to go to Germany or not, the brother hesitated: for he had been taught to go whither he was sent and not murmur; and now he feared lest he might break this rule. Hesitatingly

he replied: "I wish neither to go nor not to go". And Elias bade him go. Thus Brother Giordano da Giano was sent to Germany.[1] He lived many years amongst the Germans and at last died amongst them in an honoured old age: and in his last years he dictated a chronicle in which he set down the story of his coming to Germany and the marvellous reverence with which this new mission was received there. In this same chronicle Giordano relates that when he knew Saint Francis in the flesh, he did not think him a perfect saint nor altogether free from human weakness, and that only after Francis' canonization did he have a complete veneration for him:[2] a candid confession which explains much to the generations that have not known Francis in the flesh.

The new mission to Germany was as eminently successful as the first mission had been a failure. The success is to be attributed in the first place to the skilful leadership of Cæsar of Speyer and to the fame he had already acquired amongst his countrymen. Not all the ninety brethren who offered themselves, were sent on the mission. Cæsar took with him only twenty-five: twelve clerics and thirteen lay brothers.

Of these several were Germans; and amongst the clerics were men who were to become eminent in various ways. There were Giovanni di Carpine, the future explorer of Tartary; Thomas of Celano, who was to write the biography of Francis; Brother Barnabas a powerful preacher, besides that Giordano of whom we have spoken. They went their way, did these missionary friars, in that chivalrous spirit which prompted Francis and all true Franciscans, heedless of per-

[1] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I nos. 17, 18, pp. 6-7.
[2] *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* no. 59, p. 18.

sonal discomfort, adapting themselves unmurmuringly and courteously to all circumstances; courageous, venturesome, and merry: as Giordano's chronicle quaintly relates. In Cæsar of Speyer the simplicity of the Franciscan spirit seems to have blended well with a trained intellect and a wide knowledge of the world; as it did indeed in so many of the brethren of Northern Europe: perhaps it was due to the deeper loyalty and less mercurial temperament of the Teutonic race.

CHAPTER VI.

THE THIRD ORDER.

We come now to events in the history of Francis, which will take us for awhile apart from the ministers and all the troublous happenings of which they were the cause. This chapter will help to remind us that the story of Francis is not merely a story of the Friars Minor. These, as he himself said, were his "Knights of the Round Table," taken from the ordinary avocations of the world's life to fulfil the quest of the Lord Christ. They were knights-errant, bound by their vows of errantry to have no fixed home on the earth.

Then there were the Lady Clare and her sisters who had entered into the bond of this new chivalry, and in their seclusion were guarding the mirror in which the worshipful ideal of poverty was faithfully reflected, and keeping alight the sacred fire as all true damosels of chivalry should.

But there were others in the highways and byways of the world, who were true liege-folk to this new order of things. They did not abandon their homes nor the common duties of domestic life; they still, most of them, maintained their position in society, according to the rank in which they were placed. Some of them indeed established themselves in a certain moral seclusion from the surrounding life in which they perforce must keep a foothold; a few left the world and retired into solitary places,[1] fired by the teaching of Francis,

[1] e.g. the recluse Praxedis (*vide* Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 181).

yet without formally entering his fraternity. This more or less informal following of Francis and Clare [1] had grown up without any set rule or vow of obedience. Amongst those who were influenced by the preaching of the brethren or by the life itself which blossomed so fragrantly at the Porziuncola and San Damiano and other places, were some who drew closer in spirit than others to the fraternity, and sought to walk more directly by the laws of its life; shunning needless comfort or luxury of food and dress; purposing to live chastely in body and mind, and making the poor and luckless the objects of their especial care.

Thus there came into being a group of devoted followers of Francis and Clare who were not strictly speaking members of the fraternity, and yet were bound to it by a sense of spiritual kinship.[2] Amongst the earliest of these informal disciples were the Lord Orlando of Chiusi, who gave Monte Alvernia for the use of the brethren, and the Lady Giacoma

[1] The author of the legend of St. Clare speaks of the numbers of women who sought to imitate her example in their own homes. Cf. *Leg. S. Clarae*, 10 b; Mrs. Balfour, *Life and Legend*, p. 50; F. Paschal Robinson, *Life of St. Clare*, p. 19.

[2] I cannot accept unreservedly the conclusions of M. Sabatier and P. Mandonnet, O.P., that in the beginning of the Franciscan fraternity these informal disciples who afterwards formed the nucleus of the Third Order, were considered members of the fraternity in the same sense as the friars and the sisters of San Damiano. It seems to me that P. Mandonnet seeks to prove too much (*vide Les Origines de l'Ordo de Poenitentia*), and that his conclusion is not consistent with the fact that Francis obtained a formal Rule from Innocent III in 1209 or 1210, according to which he and the brethren were to live. It is doubtless true that the members who professed this Rule had at first but the simplest organization, which, however, gradually became more definite. But there is no evidence that people professing this Rule separated, one group forming the First Order and another the Third. And this is what P. Mandonnet must prove to maintain his thesis.

di Settesoli of Rome. Of Orlando we have already spoken.[1] He remained a most attached friend of the fraternity, glad to consider himself its servitor whenever the opportunity was given him to do service either to Francis himself or the other brethren.

The Lady Giacoma[2] was widow of Gratiano Frangipani, the noble Roman patrician whose genealogy went back to the days of myth. She had sought counsel of Francis during his visit to Rome in 1212;[3] and from that time looked to him as her spiritual guide. At the death of her husband she was left guardian of her two infant sons and administrator of the family estates. Still very young, and possessed of ample wealth, life lay before her to choose as she would, when in the first days of her widowhood, as it seems, she fell under the influence of Francis, and determined to devote herself to the education of her sons and the service of the poor and the worship of God. One would wish to know more of the Lady Giacoma than the chroniclers have told us; for this reason that, excepting Clare, she was the only woman in whose presence Francis relaxed the strict reserve with which he guarded his chivalrous purity,[4] and she was one of the very few women to whom he ever gave a token of friendship. That token was a lamb which he had perhaps rescued from

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 189.

[2] Concerning the Lady Giacoma, *vide* P. Edouard d'Alençon, *Frère Jacqueline*; M. Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect. Étude speciale du Chapitre*, 112, pp. 273-7. She is buried in the lower church of the basilica of San Francesco at Assisi near the high altar. A fresco represents her in the habit of a tertiary, and there is this inscription: "*Hic jacet Jacoba sancta nobilisque romana.*"

[3] Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1212. This date is generally accepted by Francis' biographers.

[4] It is generally held that Francis referred to Clare and the Lady Giacoma when he told a brother that he knew the faces of only two women. Cf. II Celano, 112. I have purposely spoken of Francis' "*chivalrous* purity," because

the shambles.[1] A woman of strong character was the Lady Giacoma, the manifest daughter of a fearless, determined race.[2] In characteristic fashion Francis was wont to style her "Canticle of Brother Sun" Giacoma.

Now neither the Lord Orlando nor the Lady Giacoma could part with their feudal possessions, which were family and not personal estates: yet the spirit of poverty had caught their hearts, and this was shown not only in their greater charity towards the poor but in their mental attitude towards the property they administered and which they held in trust from God for the common good, seeking to exercise their rights with justice towards others, with regard to peace with their neighbours and without personal avarice.[3] That was in fact the teaching of Francis in regard to the holding of property.[4] Personal goods which were wholly at one's own disposal he taught those who put themselves under his especial guidance, to distribute to the poor or to the Church, except what they needed for their own modest sustenance. He

I have no doubt that in this as in aught else, he was influenced by the laws of romantic chivalry.

[1] *Leg. Major*, VIII. 7, cf. *ibid.* 6. Nearly all the early biographers mention St. Francis' friendship with the Lady Giacoma; *vide* Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 37-9; *Leg. Maj. ut supra*: *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 112; Bernard de Besse, *Lib. de laudibus*, cap. 8.

[2] She was of Norman blood and of one of those Norman families which had gained their footing in Italy with the sword. Cf. P. Edouard d'Alençon, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[3] In 1217 the Lady Giacoma, on behalf of herself and her sons, who were minors, made a deed renouncing their claims to property which had been for some time in dispute at law (cf. Edouard d'Alençon, *Frère Jacqueline*, pp. 14-16; and Appendice I, pp. 37-8). P. Edouard suggests that this "act of peace" was due to the influence of Francis. We know that the later Rule of the tertiaries inculcated that they should avoid legal litigation (cf. Capestrano Rule, cap. x. and cap. XIII.; and the Rule of Nicholas IV, cap. XVII.)

[4] Cf. Epistola I. *Opuscula*, p. 87 *seq.*

would not have them amass wealth,[1] which was the cause of distraction from spiritual things, and of feuds and ill-will with one's neighbours. We may be sure, too, that these followers of Francis would not be drawn into the family rivalries and civic contentions, against which Francis pleaded so vehemently.

But if we would find the more detailed rule by which their lives were ordered, we shall undoubtedly discover it in the "Letter to all Christians," which Francis wrote in the early years of his apostolate.[2] This letter was not indeed written with the intention of making a special following for the fraternity, still less was it designed as a rule of life for any particular association. It was Francis' proclamation to the Christian world, calling upon all people, whether clerics or laics, men or women, religious or seculars, to lead a more perfect Christian life, as he therein set forth. If it became in some sort the special charter of spiritual perfection for those who now gathered more closely to the fraternity, it was probably because these took it as the expression of Francis' mind and made it their rule of life.[3]

[1] Cf. Bernard de Besse (*op. cit.* p. 76): "*Parochiali cuidam sacerdoti dicenti sibi quod vellet suus remota tamen ecclesia, frater esse, dato victui vivendi et indumenti modo, dicitur indixisse, ut annuatim collectis ecclesiae fructibus, daret pro Deo quod de praeteritis superesset*". All the early tertiaries were accustomed thus to distribute their superfluous goods. We can only conclude that it was a traditional practice derived from Francis' teaching.

[2] Epist. i., in *Opuscula S.P.F.* (Quaracchi), p. 87; F. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., *Writings of St. Francis*, pp. 98-108. Boehmer (*Analekten*, p. 49) publishes this letter under the title, *Opusculum Commonitorium*, which is indeed a more illuminative title. According to Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1213) it was written in 1213; Fr. Paschal Robinson (l.c.) prefers the date 1215.

[3] On the other hand, however, Francis may have been impelled to set forth in writing this résumé of his teaching by the demand of the people for some rule of a more perfect Christian life. According to the *Actus*, cap. 16, Francis first "thought to institute the Third Order" during that evangelising

The letter opens with the statement that Francis, on account of sickness and the weakness of his body, is unable to visit every one; therefore since he is "the servant of all and is bound to serve all and minister to them the sweet-smelling words of his Lord," he proposes to write this messenger-letter:

"The Word of the Father, so worthy, so holy, and so glorious, whose coming from heaven the Most High Father made known by his holy Archangel Gabriel to the holy and glorious Virgin Mary, from her womb took true flesh of our humanity and frailty. And He being rich above all, willed nevertheless, both He and His most blessed Mother, to choose poverty." Having struck the keynote of his message, Francis then proceeds to urge the reception of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. "Since the Divine Word offered Himself on the cross a sacrifice for us, it is the Father's Will that all of us be saved through Him and that we receive Him with a pure heart and chaste body". He then continues: "But few are they who wish to receive Him and be saved by Him, although His yoke is sweet and His burden light. They who will not taste how sweet the Lord is, and love the darkness more than the light; who will not fulfil the commandments of God, they are accursed; of them it is said by the prophet: They are cursed who decline from Thy commandments. But O how happy and blessed are they who love the Lord and do as the Lord Himself says in the Gospel: Thou shalt love the

tour he made after receiving the message from Clare and Sylvester (*vide supra*, p. 161), and he may have had this or some such thought in mind when he wrote the letter; though the phrase, "to institute the Third Order," represents the actual outcome of the informal following of the fraternity rather than the definite purpose of Francis. Francis was not then thinking of three Orders, but of the extension of the kingdom of God of which the friars were the apostles.

Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and thy neighbour as thyself. Let us therefore love God and adore Him with a pure heart and a pure mind, because He Himself seeking this above all things, says: The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. For all who adore Him must adore Him in the spirit of truth. And let us say to Him praises and prayers both day and night, saying: Our Father, Who art in heaven; because we ought always to pray and not to faint."

If the announcement of the coming of Jesus Christ in a chosen poverty, is the keynote of Francis' message, this insistence upon adoring God in spirit and in truth, is its characteristic complement. But he then goes on to lay down the positive laws, so to speak, of the Christian life. "We must indeed confess all our sins to a priest and receive from him the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Moreover let us bring forth fruits worthy of penance; and let us love our neighbours as ourselves: but if anyone will not or cannot[1] love his neighbours as himself, at least let him bring upon them no evil but rather let him do them good. Let those who have received the power of judging others, exercise judgment with mercy, even as they themselves wish to obtain mercy from the Lord: for let judgment without mercy be done to him who doth not mercy. Let us then have charity and humility and let us give alms because these wash the soul from the foulness of sin: for men lose all that they leave behind in this world, but they carry with them the reward of charity and the alms which they gave, for which they will receive from the Lord a recompense and worthy remuneration. We must also fast and abstain from vices and sins and from superfluity of food and drink; and be Catholics. We

[1] The Assisi codex omits the words "*or cannot*".

must too visit churches frequently and reverence the clergy, not so much because of themselves if they are sinners but because of their ministering of the most holy body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they sacrifice on the altar and receive and administer to others. And let us all know for certain that no man can be saved except by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the holy words of the Lord which the clergy say and announce and administer and which they alone and no others must administer. But religious especially, who have renounced the world, are bound to do more and greater things but not to leave the other undone.

"We must hold in hatred our bodies with their vices and sins, because our Lord says in the Gospel: All vices and sins go forth from the heart. We must love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. We must observe the precepts and counsels of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must also deny ourselves and put our bodies under the yoke of servitude and holy obedience as each one has promised to the Lord. And no man shall be bound by obedience to obey any one in that where a sin or fault is committed.

"But he to whom authority is entrusted and who is held to be the greater, let him be as the lesser and as the servant of the other brothers, and to each of his brothers let him show and have the mercy which he would wish to be shown to himself were he in a like case. Nor let him be angry with the brother because of the brother's fault, but with all patience and humility let him kindly teach and encourage him.

"We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh, but rather we must be simple, humble and pure. And let us hold our bodies in dishonour and contempt, because through our own fault we are all wretched and corrupt, foul and worms, as the Lord says by the prophet: 'I am a worm and

no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people'. And we must never desire to be above others, but rather we must be servants and subject to every human creature for God's sake. And all who shall do such things and persevere to the end, upon them the spirit of the Lord shall rest, and He will make in them His dwelling-place and His abode, and they will be children of the heavenly Father whose works they do, and they are the spouses, brothers and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are His spouses when by the Holy Spirit the faithful soul is wedded to Jesus Christ; we are His brothers when we do the will of His Father who is in heaven; we are His mothers when we bear Him in our heart and body by love and a pure and sincere conscience, and bring Him forth by holy work which ought to shine as an example to others. O how glorious and holy and great it is to have a Father in heaven! O how holy, fair and lovable to have a spouse in heaven! O how holy and how beloved, pleasing and humble, peaceful and sweet and lovable and above all things desirable, to have such a Brother who laid down His life for His sheep and prayed for us to the Father, saying: Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, whom Thou hast given Me." [1]

Having thus set forth the law of the Christian life, Francis proceeds with a passionate exhortation to praise God and to avoid the judgment to come, with a special reference to the vice of avarice: it is such an exhortation as he must oftentimes have given utterance to in his sermons. Finally he begs that all will receive this writing, and that those who cannot read, will have it read to them. "And all, both men

[1] Here follows a long quotation from our Lord's prayer, John xvii. 6-24. The reader will have noticed that the letter is replete with Gospel phrases, deftly woven into the text.

and women, who shall receive these things kindly and understand and send them to others for an example, if they persevere in them unto the end, may the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost bless them. Amen."[1]

This letter undoubtedly puts into words the manner of life which Francis taught all his disciples, whether in the more constrained enclosure of the religious vows or in the broader circle of the world. It was the general formulary of the whole Franciscan life. In practice it would be interpreted by those living in the world to demand a closer or more distant approximation to the observances of the brethren themselves, according to the degree of their fervour or the conditions of their state. But the letter was to them in very fact a rule of life to which they sought to conform their conduct. And thus there grew up around the fraternity a sort of outer circle of Franciscan penitents who though not bound by the vows of the fraternity, were yet of one mind and heart with it in its aspiration towards the Gospel observance which Francis preached. In their attachment to the teaching of Francis they became in a marked degree separated in thought and conduct from the world around them. The poverty of the brethren was the symbol of their desire as the marketplace and the feudal fortress were the symbols of other folk's ambitions. They did not at first nor for some years constitute a separate organization from the brethren themselves: in the larger sense they were considered members of the fraternity, even as Clare and her sisters were.

It was probably during Francis' absence in the East that Cardinal Ugolino definitely conceived the plan of giving these "secular" penitents a Rule and organization distinct from

[1] This ending is characteristic. *Vide* Regula I; *Testamentum S. Franc.*; also Epistolæ II. et IV., I. *Opuscula*, pp. 62, 82, 107, 112.

that of the brethren. May be, in the troubles which followed upon the attempt of the Vicars to establish a more monastic regime, some of these penitents themselves had begun to draw together into some sort of defensive league to assert their claim to be considered followers of Francis and to be directed by the brethren, as they did many times in the years that followed Francis' death.[1] Or it may be that some of the brethren themselves had already begun to form bodies of penitents under their own personal authority, as John de Compello did with his lepers.[2] If anything of this sort did occur,[3] it would be further reason to the Cardinal's mind, for carrying out his scheme at once; but in all likelihood Ugolino had brought the idea of a vast fraternity of "lay penitents," such as he had now conceived, back with him from his legatine journeys in Lombardy. For at this time and for some years past, that extensive province had been the home of a similar fraternity, whose Rule, approved by Pope Innocent III in 1201, presented itself to the Cardinal as the basis of a Rule for the new fraternity he was contemplating.

The Humiliati, as these Lombard penitents were named, are one of the most interesting embodiments of the pre-

[1] The "conventual" party amongst the friars were always opposed to any formal dependence of the Third Order on the First; whereas the "spirituals" were favourable to a closer alliance. Cf. Mandonnet: *Les Règles*, in *Opuscules Crit. Hist.*, fasc. iv. p. 181 *seq.*

[2] The prohibition in the Rule of 1221, chap. 12: "*Et nulla penitens mulier ab aliquo fratri recipiatur ad obedientiam, sed dato sibi consilio spirituali, sibi voluerit aut penitentiam*," perhaps points to some such abuse; though more likely it was aimed at the common mediæval custom of exacting oaths of obedience from one's pupils or penitents.

[3] As Ed. Lempp conjectures, *vide Frère Élie*, p. 42. But John de Compello's leper-community seem to have been quite a distinct and fanatical attempt to form a fraternity and not a development of the Franciscan penitent movement. He may, however, have taken the idea from some incipient penitent congregation or community.

Franciscan penitential movement.[1] They were settled in Lombardy towards the end of the twelfth century. How they came into being it is impossible to tell with any certainty.

One tradition traces their origin to some Milanese nobles who fled to Germany a century earlier. These nobles, taking to heart the lesson of adversity, had in their exile turned from secular politics to the consideration of their soul's welfare. Compelled by the loss of their property to live poorly and by the labour of their hands, they took to weaving and established amongst themselves a common life, sharing with each other the profits of their trade and giving generously to the poor. They met at regular times for religious exercises and were under the authority of a "minister" chosen by themselves. They created in fact a religious communism. But they were not "religious" in the ordinary use of the word; they could marry and live in their own houses. When at length they were at liberty to return to Milan, they took back with them this manner of life into their own country.

Whatever may be the value of this tradition, certain it is that when Innocent III ascended the Papal throne, the Humiliati were well established throughout Milanese territory, and held the woollen trade largely in their hands. They had their meeting-places where they met both to transact business and for religious exercises.[2] Not all of them, however, were woollen-workers, but all had a trade of some sort. They dressed simply in a habit of grey woollen stuff.

[1] Concerning the Humiliati cf. Tiraboschi, *Vetera Humiliatorum Monumenta*; Bolland, *Acta SS.* Sept. vol. VII, p. 320 *seq.* Jacques de Vitry speaks of them in his well-known letter of 1216, and in his *Historia Occidentalis* (Douia), pp. 334-7.

[2] These meeting-places were styled *convenia* or *parlatoria*: hence the Humiliati were known also as *Fratres de convenio.*

By the end of the twelfth century the Humiliati had thrown out two offshoots of a monastic character. One of these was an institute of men and women who added to the common observances of the fraternity, the three vows of religion; the other was an institute of priests who lived in community.[1] The Rule approved by Pope Innocent in 1201, belongs however to the original lay-fraternity:[2] and it was this which Cardinal Ugolino was to take as the basis of the Rule he caused to be written for the new fraternities of lay-penitents. The Rule of 1201 set before its adherents the imitation of Jesus Christ in His humility and meekness, as their leading purpose. Hence the Humiliati were to be patient in adversity, to love God and their neighbour, even their enemy, and to do unto others as they would be done by. They were to make good any injury they might happen to inflict on any one. They must obey the prelates of the Church. But the chief interest in this Rule is in those specific regulations which were set down with a view to the prevalent evils of the time. The married members were to be faithful to the marriage-vow, nor were husbands and wives to separate, "save on account of fornication". No member was to possess tithes "since it is in nowise lawful for lay people to hold tithes," and all tithes and first-fruits were to be delivered up to the Church. Further, out of their goods and fruits which remained to them after the payment of their tithes, they were

[1] The organizer of the priest-community of Humiliati was St. John of Meda (*vide Acta SS.* loc. cit.). It is noteworthy that afterwards this priest-community came to be called the "First Order of Humiliati," though a later organization than the other two, in point of time. Similarly the monastic communities of men and women came to be known as the Second Order, and then the original foundation was styled the Third Order of Humiliati.

[2] Vide *Epist. Innoc.* III. "*Incumbit vobis*," of 7 June, 1201, in Tiraboschi, vol. II. pp. 128-34; Potthast, 1416.

to give alms to the poor and all superfluity of goods that remained to them after they had made provision for their own frugal sustenance, were to be distributed to the poor. As to their clothing, they were to dress neither too finely nor squalidly, "since neither an affected squalor nor a too careful cleanliness, befit a Christian". They were to fast at certain times and to observe the canonical hours of prayer, saying for each hour seven *Paters* in honour of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. They must provide for the sick brothers and sisters, and assist at the burial when any brother or sister died. Finally they were to assemble every Sunday in some fitting place "where one or several of the brethren of approved faith and knowledge of religion, and powerful in deed as well as in word, shall by licence of the diocesan bishop, set forth words of exhortation to those assembled to hear the word of God, admonishing and persuading them to live good lives and do works of piety: but so that they do not speak of the articles of the Faith and the sacraments of the Church".[1] Such was the original Rule of the Humiliati as approved by the Holy See.

But Pope Innocent almost immediately imposed yet another precept: the Humiliati were not to take unnecessary oaths.[2] Colourless as this precept might seem to us, it yet became one of the farthest reaching of the penitential principles in the years to come: for it was definitely aimed at the

[1] That is, they were "to preach penance" or give moral discourses, but not to expound theology. Only "preachers" properly so-called could expound theology. The permission given to the Humiliati was the same as that given to Francis when Innocent III commissioned him to preach penance; only that Francis' commission was more widely extended. He could preach penance "through the whole world" and not merely at the meetings of the brethren. The Franciscan tertiary Rule, as we shall see, gave to the ministers of the tertiaries a privilege exactly similar to that given to the Humiliati.

[2] Tiraboschi, vol. II. pp. 135-8; Potthast, 1415.

feudal oath which bound a man to take the part of his feudal lord or the commune in any quarrel, however unjust or arbitrary. And in fact the refusal of the Humiliati to take the feudal oath soon brought them into collision with the civic authorities, and the persecution to which they were subjected caused Innocent in 1214 to address a sharp remonstrance to the magistrates and governors of Lombardy.[1] This obligation imposed on the Lombard penitents was a stroke of genius: it became a most powerful weapon in the hands of the Church in dealing both with turbulent civic governments and with the Empire itself; and one is not surprised that both imperial governors and city magistrates refused to recognize it and sought to penalize those who acted upon it.[2]

But the Humiliati, although sanctioned by the Church, were not always above suspicion with the ecclesiastical authorities;[3] some of them indeed went over to the heretics.[4] And like all the earlier penitential movements, they were tainted with a gloomy puritanism. Somehow they failed to grasp the beauty and liberty of the Gospel: there was no joyous song in their religion;[5] and for that reason they could never have captured the new spirit of the age with its thirst for life and freedom. To the end they would remain a mere provincial fraternity, or a religious sect.

Oftentimes in his observant way, Cardinal Ugolino must have contrasted the Lombard fraternity with the Umbrian; and as we have said, it was probably from Lombardy that he brought back to Rome the idea of a new lay-fraternity, such

[1] Tiraboschi, vol. II. p. 156; Potthast, 4944.

[2] Thus they imposed a war-tax on those who refused to take up arms at their bidding. *Vide infra*, p. 342.

[3] Cf. *Epist. Honorii III*, in Tiraboschi, vol. I. p. 77.

[4] *Chron. Burchardi*, in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.* tom. XXIII. p. 376.

[5] Cf. Gebhardt, *L'Italie Mystique*, pp. 34-5.

as he proposed to Francis when they met during the winter of 1220-1221.[1]

Unfortunately the original Rule of the Order of Penance, as the new fraternity was named, which the Cardinal himself composed in consultation with Francis[2] is at present lost, if indeed it is not altogether destroyed; and the earliest version of it known to us, dates only from 1228, seven years after the institution of the fraternity,[3] and by that time it is probable some of the original precepts were modified. As it has come down to us, the Rule is not an inspiring document unless you read it in its relationship to the circumstances of the age and the religious fervour which made it possible. It

[1] Mariano of Florence states that the Rule of the Third Order was written in 1220 by Francis and Ugolino whilst they were together at Florence. But it is proved that Ugolino was not at Florence in 1220. Cf. *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an. II, fasc. I. p. 96.

[2] The decisive part taken by Card. Ugolino in the institution of the Third Order is not concealed in contemporary chronicles. The author of the *Vita Gregorii IX* in Muratori, *Rerum Ital. Script.* tom III. p. 575, says: "*Poenitentium Fratrum et Domonarum inclusarum novos instituit ordines et ad summum usque provexit. Minorum etiam ordinem intra initia sub limite incerto vagantem novæ regulæ traditione direxit et informavit informem.*"

Ugolino, therefore, according to this author, *instituted* the two orders of Enclosed Ladies (Poor Clares) and of the Brethren of Penance (tertiaries) but only directed the organizing of the Friars Minor. The distinction between the two parts played by the Cardinal as institutor and director is noteworthy. Ugolino was not merely the adviser of Francis in the composing of the Rule of the Third Order, no more than in the composing of the Ugoline Constitutions for the Poor Ladies: he was in both cases the accredited author. Bernard de Besse, writing sometime later, also says that Cardinal Ugolino wrote the Rule of the Third Order in consulation with Francis.

His words are: "*In regulis seu vivendi formis ordinis istorum dictandis sacre memorie dominus papa Gregorius in minori adhuc officio constitutus, beato Francisco intima familiaritate conjunctus, devote supplebat, quod vero sancto in dictandi scientia deerat.*" (*Lib. de Laudibus*, ed. Hilarin a Lucerna, p. 76.)

[3] This is the "Capestrano" Rule, *vide* Appendix III, *infra*.

is a code of legal constitutions clear-cut and calmly thought out, such as an ecclesiastical lawyer might deal with in court. It presents none of the glowing idealism of the early Franciscan days; it has not even the evangelical fervour which we find in Pope Innocent's Rule for the Humiliati; it is simply a Rule for external conduct. The brothers and sisters are bound to an austere simplicity in dress; the price and texture of their garments are rigidly fixed after the manner of mediaeval sumptuary enactments. They must observe certain fasts and abstinences and recite a number of *Paters* at the canonical hours, unless they are able to read the psalter, when they must recite the psalms according to the use of the Papal Court or at least an equal number of psalms. They are to shun the banquets and stage-plays which were an immoral feature in the public life of the time; to confess their sins and receive Holy Communion three times in the year; to make good neglected tithes and pay future tithes faithfully. They must not carry arms; and except in certain cases approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, they must not take the legal oaths. They are not to have recourse to secular tribunals for litigation amongst themselves, and they are bound to make their will, if they have property, within three months after their profession in the fraternity. Before being admitted to the fraternity the novices must pay their debts: they must also be at peace with their neighbours. No one suspected of heresy might be received unless he had first been acquitted in the bishop's court; and no married woman might be admitted except with the consent of her husband. Should any brother be guilty of scandal and fail to make reparation he must be expelled from the fraternity and denounced to the magistrate or governor of the place.

Now in the political and social conditions of the early thirteenth century, these regulations meant a throwing down of the gauntlet by the Church against established conventions. They struck directly at the monstrous growth of luxurious habits in food and dress as well as at the inordinate love of pleasure which drew men and women to tourney and pageant and public revel, to the neglect of religion and the serious business of life, and they were calculated to strike a mortal blow to the degenerate feudal conception of society which bound men by oath to fight for their party whether the cause be just or unjust. So far the Rule bears the impress of Cardinal Ugolino's statesmanship: it was designed to bring the widespread religious enthusiasm created by Francis, to bear upon the actual social and political abuses which were arming the world against the Church and the Gospel. One seeks in vain throughout the Rule as we now have it, for any expression of the more universal Franciscan message as Francis himself delivered it; just as we seek in vain for the essential Franciscan life in the Constitutions the Cardinal gave to the Sisters of St. Clare.

But as in the case of the Poor Ladies the Ugoline Constitutions never represented the whole intent of their vocation nor the spirit in which they lived, so was it with the new fraternity of penitents. Behind the Cardinal was Francis, and his word was the fuller Rule by which they ordered their lives: and to this law the Cardinal himself bowed in affectionate reverence if not with entire conviction. And so in the lives of the first penitents we find the same love of poverty and the same exuberant love of their fellowmen who were in sorrow or need, as make the story of the first friars so spiritually exhilarating. Thus it was the recognized law of the fraternity—whether inserted in the

original Rule or merely an unwritten law, we cannot say—that the penitents should distribute every year amongst the poor, what remained over and above their yearly income after their own needs were provided for.[1] Many on entering the fraternity at once disbursed whatever property they did not need for their own sustenance. They took to nursing the sick-poor either in the poor man's home or in hospitals. Thus they spent their lives in emulation of the life of the Porziuncola, as far as each one might.

The new fraternity grew rapidly: throughout all Italy within a few years local congregations were established and the penitents became a social force to be reckoned with by the secular power. Their very dress was a challenge to the worldliness around them: they might not wear silk nor coloured garments; their furs were simple lamb-skin; the open flowing sleeve was forbidden them.[2]

They were, moreover, a religious corporation and as such directly subject to the ecclesiastical courts and not to the secular. The magistrates of the commune or the governors of cities and districts, had no right to enforce upon them public offices or burdens which contravened the letter or purpose of their profession. Hence they could not be forced legally to take up arms at the bidding of the secular power nor to take civic office.

They were a body apart, just as monks and nuns were. And so wherever a congregation of the penitents was established the secular authorities found themselves faced by a

[1] The bull "*Detestanda*" of 30 March, 1228, mentions this as one of the matters in which the penitents were hindered by the civic authorities (cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. pp. 39-40).

[2] *Regula Antiqua*, cap. 1. The rule concerning dress, however, was open to a wide interpretation according to the rank of the person or the customs of the place, especially in the case of married women.

body of citizens who were legally protected by the law of the Church—which was co-ordinate with the law of the empire and the commune—in their withdrawal from secular affairs.[1] The magistrates and governors protested as they had already protested in the case of the Humiliati, and endeavoured to withstand the claims of the new fraternity. But the Church met their opposition not merely on legal grounds, but on moral grounds. The penitents were men of peace according to the Gospel, and might not therefore be forced to take part in feuds and wars which were mostly waged in opposition to all Christian principle and the common good of Christendom. They were again men who put the claims of justice and Christian charity before all other earthly considerations, and could not therefore be bound by the secular power to assume public offices which were notoriously held by practices of corruption and party favour,[2] nor could they be forced to support the system of usury and dishonest trade with which industrial enterprise was generally interwoven.[3]

[1] The first intervention of the Holy See on behalf of the new penitents was on 16 December, 1221, when Honorius III addressed a letter "*Significatum nobis*" to the Bishop of Rimini, ordering him to protect the penitents of Faenza and the neighbourhood against the magistrates. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 8.

[2] Humbert de Romanis, the Master-General of the Friars Preachers, says the penitents refused "offices to which sin attached". Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 142, note *e*.

[3] Cf. bulls "*Significatum est*," *ut supra*: "*Nimis patenter*," of 25 June, 1227 (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 30) "*Detestanda*," of March, 1228 (*ibid.* pp. 39-40); "*Nimis patenter*," of 5 April, 1231 (*ibid.* p. 71); "*Ne is qui bonis*," of 15 March, 1232 (*ibid.* p. 99); "*Ut cum majeri*," of 21 November, 1234 (*ibid.* p. 142). According to these bulls the penitents were freed from taking oaths except such as were necessary for the Faith, the Church and the making of wills; they were not to be compelled to take part in military service; nor to pay the special war-taxes imposed on those who did not bear arms; nor to accept public offices, and they were not to be hindered from distributing their superfluous wealth to the poor.

The commune had used its power to enmesh the individual in all manner of unchristian practice: the Church replied by withdrawing the individual who aspired to a more Christian life, from the commune's jurisdiction in the matters which affected his Christian profession.[1] Thus there arose in many places a new civic struggle between the partisans of the established order of feud and rapine and the partisans of the idea of peace and neighbourly service. Of the eventual developments of the fraternity of penance and how it became the support of the Papacy in its struggle with the Empire, this is not the place to tell the story; we are but concerned with its origins and its relationship with Francis. As we have seen, it was in part the creation of Cardinal Ugolino and as such belongs to the general history of the Holy See in the thirteenth century; nevertheless it was a true outcome of the Franciscan revival of Faith and but for Francis it could hardly have come into being.

The first penitent congregation was established in Florence, probably at the direct instigation of the Cardinal him-

The penitents, however, did not always refuse to pay the war-tax when it was for the defence of their country. Thus Blessed Peter of Siena (died 1289) insisted on paying the war-tax though in view of his being a penitent, the magistrates were unwilling to accept it. "This money," he said, "belongs to my country when it is needed for its defence" (cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1289).

[1] The authority claimed by the Italian commune over the individual left him but little liberty of action even in the most intimate concerns of personal life. His private life was regulated by consular decree. His clothes, dwelling-place, even the trees he might plant in his garden were thus fixed. As Emile Gebhardt remarks: "*La cité italienne n'est, en effet, une œuvre de liberté et d'égalité qu'en apparence. La communauté y survit et y entrave l'individu, car les franchises de l'association républicaine ont pour garantie l'abdication de toute volonté personnelle*" (*L'Italie Mystique*, p. 21). The ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Middle Ages was, at least in the first instance, supported by public opinion as an escape from this secular tyranny.

self;[1] and it is noteworthy as showing the spirit in which the fraternity was nurtured: for the Florentine penitents at once established a hospital in which they themselves served the sick poor.[2] And in fact whatever may have been the political and social influence of the new fraternity of penance, its chief glory is in that sublime spirit of loving compassion and simple unworldliness which runs through the story of its beginnings. A typical Franciscan penitent was Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, who had the sick-poor removed from their squalid huts and conveyed to her castle on the Wartburg, where she nursed them herself with sisterly care; and who, when released from the cares of State, renounced the pomp and conventions of Court life and went to live in a cottage, working with her hands as the honest poor must work for their bread. In after years men fondly recited the story how her husband, the Duke of Thuringia, found red and white roses in her mantle when he was searching for the bread which he knew she was secretly carrying to the poor. Those roses are at least symbolical of the sweet charity which made all her menial services for the poor a spring of artless joy. And that same sweet charity lies like a golden haze upon the stories of all the first Franciscan penitents.

Thus, as an instance, take the story of the merchant Luchesio, who tradition says was the first penitent received

[1] Mariano of Florence says the Florentine congregation was established on 20 May, 1221. He may have had access to documents in the city archives which are unknown to us. Cf. Bartholi, *Tract. de Indulgentia*, ed. Sabatier, Appendice, pp. 160-1; *Compendium Chron. FF. Min.* in *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an. II. fasc. I. p. 98. Cardinal Ugolino and Francis were in Florence in April, 1221. Cf. Rob. Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz*, II, Band I. pp. 125-9.

[2] Cf. Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1221; Sbaralea, *Bull.* II. p. 293. The hospital stood first in the piazza of Santa Maria Novella; it was afterwards transferred to the Church of San Martino, whence the Florentine penitents became known as the Brothers and Sisters of San Martino.

into the fraternity. When Francis met him in the spring of 1221, he was a retired merchant living in exile at Poggibonzi in Florentine territory, and edifying the neighbourhood by his charity to the poor and his love of religion. But Luchesio had not always been a man of remarkable Christian habits. In his young days, when he was a successful merchant at Cagiano in the territory of Siena, he was known as a gay spirit with ambitions to rise in the world: and he was not above paying court to the nobles and the men of influence, whom he would oblige with his money and delight with his ready wit. He married a woman of sensibility and beauty, who shared his ambitions and contributed not a little to his popularity. People named her Buona Donna—the gracious lady: and this name befitted her through the coming vicissitudes which were to mark her husband's career.

Luchesio was an ardent politician: he could hardly have attained to any social consideration if he had not been. Then with a turn of the wheel fortune went against the Guelphs and in favour of the Ghibellines, and Luchesio had to flee for safety into the friendly Florentine town of Poggibonzi. Adversity and exile chastened his spirit and his thoughts turned to religion. Thus he was prepared to listen when Francis came along searching for souls. With the consent of the faithful Buona Donna, Luchesio now sold his property, all except four acres of land, and distributed the money to the poor. Then husband and wife received from Francis the colourless woollen habit of the penitents. From that time Luchesio worked his own small farm and lived on its produce. His house became a hostelry for the poor whom Francis-like he fed daily before he fed himself. Frequently he would take long journeys seeking out the sick, and finding them he would bring them to his house, sometimes putting them upon an

ass, at other times bearing them on his shoulders: and Buona Donna received and nursed them. On occasions when the malaria was abroad, Luchesio would journey to stricken districts even as far as the sea-coast, to distribute medicines and food. When his own means ran short he went round questing from his neighbours for the wherewith to feed the hungry.

Thus in incessant service for the needy and in self-denying love of God and their neighbour, Luchesio and his wife came to the life eternal. They had been true companions in life and they kept their companionship in death. Both fell mortally sick about the same time. Buona Donna prayed she might not out-live her husband and her prayer was heard. Luchesio rose from his bed to assist his wife in her last agony; then he returned to bed and died also: "in death they were not divided".[1]

[1] Cf. *Acta SS.* Aprilis, tom. III. pp. 594 *seq.*; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 27; Wadding, *Annales*, ad ann. 1213 and 1221.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FRIARS ESTABLISH A SCHOOL.

And now, reader, I must ask you to give your attention to that question of schools for the friars, which brought sorrow into the life of Francis in his latter years and which has ever since been a source of controversy amongst those who speak of him.

Some there are who would have us believe that Francis was altogether antagonistic to learning and that, if he had had his way, he would have banned the teaching of the schools from his fraternity for all time. And, indeed, it is easy to find words of his which, taken apart from the circumstances in which they were uttered and from the context of his life, might well seem to favour this judgment of him. But of no man were it more misleading so to quote his words. Francis, be it remembered, was no philosopher given to uttering abstract or universal propositions. He was at all times a man of action dealing directly with the concrete case before him. And as it happens, most of Francis' sayings concerning book-learning were uttered in the stress of a struggle for the maintenance of the very life of the fraternity as he had founded it: in which struggle the question of scholastic studies was chiefly advocated by those who lacked sympathy with the original purpose of the fraternity and looked for inspiration to the outer world. Had they achieved their

purpose, the fraternity would have been totally transformed from that which it was designed to be, into something utterly foreign to its own character and vocation. Francis, therefore, was in the position of a man who feels himself bound to guard what has been entrusted to him against those who would snatch it from his keeping in order to pervert it to some traitorous use.

In such circumstances friendly argument with the enemy at the gate will seem a dangerous approach to disloyalty. With the demand of some of the brethren that they should be allowed to make book-studies and attend schools, went the contention, either openly confessed or implicit, that the fundamental ideal of poverty must be reconsidered and brought into closer relationship with what the dissident brethren considered the greater usefulness of the fraternity; and so when the question of studies was brought up, it was complicated by its connexion with a policy of secular prudence which to the soul of Francis meant a betrayal of the life of Poverty.

To state the truth of the matter at once, Francis did not anathematize academic study and book-learning as an evil in itself, but he valued as a supreme treasure of his vocation that heart-knowledge which is gained in the battle of life when men are wholly intent upon the achievement of the cause to which they are consecrated. Any learning other than this was to him a mere mental luxury and a distraction from the real business of life, and tended to self-conceit more than to the service of God.

Now he was convinced that the demand for books and schools which had arisen amongst the brethren had no relationship with the vocation to which they were dedicated but to purposes apart: and in great measure this was but too

true. Had it been otherwise the bitter controversies which now arose, would never have arisen: for Francis, far from being indifferent to mental culture, had a native feeling for it. He gave peculiar reverence to men whose judgments were weighted with solid learning, and especially to theologians of the right sort who spoke of religion with understanding and wisdom: these he declared were lords amongst men and deserving of homage.[1] It is to be noted, that he was accustomed to fill the more responsible offices in the fraternity with learned brethren. Thus he appointed Peter Cathanii, a doctor of law, to be his first Vicar-General; he sent Pacifico, the poet-laureate, as minister to France; the two Vicars set to govern the fraternity during his absence in the East were both men of parts intellectually; Brother Elias, as we know, had acquired some reputation in the schools of Bologna. Nor was he himself without mental culture. He had been greatly influenced by the new romantic literature of his time and made use of the romances of chivalry in his instruction of the brethren. He emulated too the minstrels of Provence. At one time he had felt the attraction to more exact studies.[2] Nor is this incident without significance: for once when some brethren were anxious to study the Scriptures and there was only one volume at hand, Francis took and divided the leaves and distributed to each brother a portion, that the brothers might not have to wait till the whole volume could be passed round in turn.[3]

But where Francis fell foul of many of the schoolmen

[1] Cf. *Testamentum S. Franc.*: "*Et omnes theologos et qui ministrant verba divina debemus honorare et venerari sicut qui ministrant nobis spiritum et tivam*".

[2] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 4: "*Ego similiter tentatus fui habere libros.*" etc.

[3] S. Bonaventure, *Epist. de Tribus Quæstionibus*, no. 10, in *Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi), vol. VIII. p. 334 b.

who had entered the fraternity, was in his plain disregard for what we now call the theory of "learning for learning's sake". He held that knowledge is to be valued only in relation to character and action. He would say: "As much knowledge has a man, as he does deeds; and a religious prays well only inasmuch as he works well: for the doer is known by his fruits".[1] And again he would say that "they who rely upon book-learning in the day of sorrow and battle, will find their hands empty";[2] since it is not learning but the fulfilment of one's duty which makes a man spiritually strong.

Moreover he held as of little account that preaching which is based on book-knowledge rather than on spiritual experience. His brethren, he would say, were not called by God to be orators to tickle the fancy of the audience with elegance of language and fine conceits, but to be preachers of the Divine Word. They were to speak God's message. This message they would learn more truly in prayer and in pondering in the heart upon Divine Truth, than in books. He would say: "The preacher should first draw in by secret prayer what he is afterwards to pour out in sacred discourse; he must rather grow hot within than utter cold words outwardly".

It was not by fine words that the people would be converted but by the glowing spirit: nor could he repress his scorn for those brethren who took credit to themselves when they had delivered some elaborately prepared oration and gained the people's applause. "Why do you boast of people converted," he would exclaim, "when it is my simple brethren who have converted them by their prayers?"[3]

His indignation with these vain scholars arose partly from his great reverence for life itself. Life with its

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 4. [2] *ibid.* cap. 70. [3] II Celano, 163-4.

emotions and duties, was too sacred to be their plaything. Knowledge begotten of life filled him with a sense of awe: it meant to him a coming into the very presence of God, the source of all Truth. As showing his singular reverence for this higher knowledge we must note that he held in great respect all spoken and written words, since they symbolized to him this divine self-revelation: which respect was shown in naïve fashion. He would never obliterate a word he had written, however unnecessary it might be to the sense of his writing; and he was accustomed to gather up any scraps of writing he found on the road and put them aside in reverence.

Once when it was pointed out to him, perhaps not without sarcastic intention, that the scrap of writing he had rescued was from some heathen author, he replied that it mattered not, since the words, whether of heathens or of other men, all came from the wisdom of God.[1]

This intense reverence for the written word showed itself also in his method of reading: for whenever he came upon a passage which stimulated his thought, he would read no further, but closed the book and pondered upon what he had read that he might not lose aught of a good thing. And that was how he would have the brethren read. One good book read thus, he said, was better than a thousand treatises hurriedly skimmed over.[2]

Thus Francis, as you see, was no contemner of reading; but he would have the brethren study only what would strengthen and inflame the heart with the knowledge proper to their vocation. And he would have them think more with the heart than with the brain. For life for the Friar Minor, meant above all else the love of Jesus Christ and of the world for Christ's sake. Hence he would have it that the

[1] I Celano, 82. [2] II Celano, 102.

one desirable object of study was Jesus Christ the Lord of the fraternity. Yet this saying must not be understood in any narrow sense. Did not the tales of Roland and the Paladins stimulate Francis in the service of His Divine Master? Whatever touched his heart with a generous impulse spoke to him of his Lord's life and service, and he took tribute in the way of knowledge from all the good and noble things he found upon the earth whether in the deeds of men or in the existence of other creatures. He found,

> "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> "Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

All told him of the life he thirsted for. Perhaps this very receptivity of his being to the voices of Nature itself, made him feel less the need of books than do men of duller intuitions and slower hearts; and for this reason perhaps he failed to appreciate the need which most men have of seeking an interpretation of their own experience in the writings of others. But though this may have had some influence upon his attitude towards the accumulation of books by the brethren, it was not the ground of his opposition. His real opposition came from his instinctive perception that in their book-learning, many of the brethren were losing their simplicity of heart and the pure ideal of their calling: they were setting aside that heart-knowledge which is gained by spiritual experience and the fulfilment of one's proper purpose, for the sake of a mere intellectual satisfaction: and that meant ruin to the character of the fraternity. Such purely intellectual knowledge, or knowledge trained upon mere secular purposes, was what men mostly acquired in the schools, and for this reason he would say that when a learned man entered the fraternity, if he wished to be a true Friar Minor, he must in some sort

leave behind him the learning he had gained in the world. He once expressed his mind concerning the reception of schoolmen, in this fashion: "I would have a man of letters come to me with this petition: 'See, brother, I have lived long in the world and have never truly known my God. Give me, I beseech you, a place removed from the turmoil of the world where I may grieve over my past years, and where, gathering together the scattered energies of my heart, I may reform my soul for better things.'" And he added: "What think you would the man become who made such a beginning? Verily he would go forth to all things with the strength of a lion unchained. Such a man might at length be confidently assigned to the true ministry of the Word, because he would pour forth that which was boiling within him."[1] That parable strikes the keynote of Francis' opposition to academic studies. In the schools men "did not truly know their God".

But the brethren who were clamouring to be allowed to study, saw only in Francis' attitude a stern unreasoning opposition to learning. And Francis had not the gift of making a logical analysis of a situation and of unravelling the tangled threads of a complexity. Perhaps if he had, the others would not have understood: they too were encumbered by a mental horizon beyond which they could not see.

They saw what others, not of the fraternity, were doing, and felt what they might do if they were as other men. The Friars Preachers, for example, were studying theology and opening schools and becoming a power in the Church; and why not they? Very subtly the sense of power was moulding their thoughts: they were conscious of the power latent in the fraternity, as a new-born virile nation exults in its energy;

[1] II Celano, 194.

and they were keen for conquest. It was an intoxication of the mind and they would gladly use the world's weapons to subdue the world. And then, many of them felt that fascination for study which was beginning to draw men in their thousands to the great centres of learning, such as Bologna and Salerno.[1] The fraternity, recruited widely from all classes and conditions, could hardly escape that new enthusiasm for learning which was sweeping over Christendom.

And a wonderful thing it seemed, that gift of knowledge. True, the schools were as yet in that early stage in which memory and fancy are cultivated almost to the exclusion of the deeper reflective faculty, and when the forms of knowledge and the art of expression are of more immediate concern than knowledge itself. Yet even so they seemed to open out an infinitude of mental liberty and to transform a man as by magic from the condition of a clod of earth into something more ethereal. There was an intoxication in the conceit, which those will forgive who remember in their own case the fascination of that youthful exercise of the intellect and the first sadness that comes of the awakening to a deeper reality. Most of the brethren who came from the schools, now that the fraternity was becoming a power with the people, had passed through no deep spiritual experience which would have sobered their minds and brought grace to their knowledge: they had but succumbed to the general enthusiasm which Francis evoked. The learning of the schools was still an idol of their desire.

Thus between them and Francis there was a gulf of misunderstanding. Each spoke of learning and the study of books with his heart turned towards a goal different from

[1] Bologna, it is said, at this time numbered ten thousand students. Cf. Denifle, *Die Universitäten des Mittelalters*, I. pp. 135-6.

that which attracted the other. And that was what Francis felt. The anxiety for books and schools was a symptom of a spirit turning away from the truth which he had taught them and looking towards the outer world in which poverty had no part. "Wheedled by the evil spirits, these brethren of mine will depart from the way of holy simplicity and most high poverty," he cried out. "They will receive monies and bequests and legacies of all kinds; they will leave poor and solitary places and build sumptuous houses for themselves in boroughs and cities, which will proclaim to men not the condition of the poor but the pomp of princes and lords of the world; with much cunning and human prudence and importunity they will seek and procure privileges from the Church and the Sovereign Pontiffs, not only relaxing but destroying the purity of the Rule they have promised to observe and of the life revealed to them by Christ." [1]

The difficulty became acute over the convent which Peter Stacia had built at Bologna during Francis' absence in the East. That convent was to Francis a symbol of the evil which the unholy desire for learning would work amongst the brethren, leading them to set at naught the poverty and simplicity proper to their vocation. Whether Peter Stacia had meant to establish a school of theology after the example of the Dominicans, or whether he intended the brethren at Bologna to follow the ordinary curriculum of law and arts in the university, we cannot say. In either case he had acted openly in defiance of Francis and with manifest disregard for the original spirit of the fraternity. In uttering his malediction

[1] *Legenda Vetus*, no. 1, in *Opuscules de Critique Historique*, tom. I. fasc. III. pp. 87-8. The passage undoubtedly expresses the actual fears of Francis though perhaps in the language of the writer of the legend. Compare with it II Celano, 69, 157.

upon the head of Peter Stacia, Francis had cursed the secular ambition which was invading the Order. That curse struck terror into the hearts of many; the more so because Francis to the end of his life could never be induced to recall it. Nevertheless the restless anxiety for study was not stilled. It was deliberately encouraged by Brother Elias, who even permitted the lay-brethren to have books for study. And this seemed to Francis the greater evil; for from the time the troubles began, he had begun to fasten his faith upon the lay-brethren as the upholders of the simplicity of the fraternity.[1] With mingled indignation and sorrow he therefore one day listened to a lay-brother novice who came to him to ask leave to have a psalter. The Vicar-General had already given him the desired permission, but knowing Francis' mind regarding this matter, the novice was uneasy, and yet he dearly wanted the psalter to read and study. "Father," he said, "it would be a great comfort to me to have a psalter, and the General has allowed it unto me; nevertheless I would fain have it with your knowledge and approval." But Francis met the request with an outburst of pent-up sorrow: "Charles the Emperor, Roland and Oliver and all the paladins and puissant men who were mighty in war, pursuing the heathen with sore sweat and labour even to the death, achieved a victory worthy of remembrance and at last themselves died in battle martyrs for the faith of Christ; but now there are many who only for the telling of the deeds they did, would have honour and human praise. Likewise amongst ourselves there are many who only by reciting and preaching the works

[1] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 72; Eccleston [ed. Little], col. XIII. p. 88. Elias pursued a policy of favouring the lay-brothers and attaching them to his person. They became his chief supporters later on. Cf. Salimbene, loc. cit. pp. 99-100.

which the saints have done, wish to receive honour and praise." The novice went away but returned after some days with the same request. Francis was sitting by the fire. When the novice had recited his petition, Francis replied somewhat caustically: "and when you have got the psalter you will covet and desire a breviary. And when you have got a breviary you will sit in a high chair like a great prelate and call to your brother: 'bring me my breviary'." Then he took a handful of ashes and in dramatic mockery made as though to wash his head with the ashes, murmuring meanwhile aloud: "Me, a breviary! Me, a breviary!" The novice shamefacedly looked on. But afterwards Francis took him more gently and persuasively: "Brother," he said, "I too have likewise been tempted to have books, but whilst I was still ignorant of God's will concerning this matter I took a book wherein were written the Gospels of the Lord, and I prayed that in the first opening of the book He would show me His Will; and having finished my prayer, in the first opening of the book this word of the Gospel came to me: 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to others in parables'." Then after awhile he added meditatively: "So many there are who are ready to exalt themselves unto knowledge, that he will be blessed who makes himself barren for the love of the Lord God". Not for some months did the novice again seek to have the psalter, but at last the temptation once more grew strong; and again he applied to Francis one day when he was standing near his cell at the Porziuncola. Francis answered tersely: "Go; act in this matter as your minister has told you". The novice, however, had not gone many steps when Francis ran after him and bade him come back to the spot where he had spoken. Then he knelt at the novice's feet and confessed that he had spoken wrongly against

the Rule: "Brother, I have done wrong," he said, "for whosoever would be a true Friar Minor, must have nothing save only, as the Rule allows, a tunic and cord and breeches and, those who need them, shoes". So ended that incident to the novice's discomfiture.[1]

Matters stood thus between Francis and the brethren, when in 1221 or 1222—the precise date cannot be fixed—the house of studies at Bologna was reopened, as we have said, through the intervention of Cardinal Ugolino,[2] who on the occasion of a visit to Bologna, made a public declaration that the house did not belong to the Friars Minor but to the Holy See, and that the brethren had but the simple use of it. The declaration was designed to meet Francis' scruples on the point of poverty. It may be doubted whether he was altogether consenting to this arrangement; but the essential principle of non-ownership being conceded, he made no further opposition to the friars returning there.

The Cardinal had undoubtedly come to the conclusion that it was in the interest of the Church that the Friars Minor should study theology and have theological schools. There were several reasons for such a step. Men of heroic sanctity and high spiritual enlightenment, such as Francis and some others in the fraternity, might perhaps do well as preachers without scholastic training; but not all the brethren, nor by far the greater part, were of such exceptional spirituality. And in any case, even if they had been, circumstances now were different. In the beginning and until lately, the preaching of the brethren had been

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 4; II Celano, 195.

[2] Ugolino was at Bologna in July, August, and October of 1221. Cf. Guido Levi, *Registri*, pp. 24, 38, 108, 121. He was still in Northern Italy in the beginning of 1222, and may have visited Bologna that year also, although there is no record of such a visit. Cf. *supra*, p. 316.

confined to the preaching "of penance," that is, of right Christian conduct: they had not been called upon to expound the dogmas of faith. But in view of the spread of heresy the Cardinal meant to extend the scope of the friars' preaching so as to instruct the people in the Faith and combat the heretics. But for this, theological training would be necessary. Already the Church was suffering from itinerant preachers who, in sheer ignorance of Catholic theology, preached heresy.[1]

But the Cardinal had a yet further purpose. One of the crying needs of the day was for theological schools for the training of the clergy. In the universities theology was either excluded from the course of studies or it was expounded on purely speculative principles which led to all manner of heresies. The Aristotelian philosophy seemed to be regarded as of higher authority than the Fathers of the Church in the interpreting of Holy Scripture.[2] Even in the monastic schools the studies were mostly concerned with law and medicine to the neglect of Scripture and theology.[3] The Holy See had endeavoured to remedy the evil by ordaining the establishment of Church schools; but the ordinance had remained largely a dead letter owing to the lack of competent masters.[4] The Dominicans had from the beginning taken the matter in hand with immediate success, and Cardinal Ugolino looked to the Friars Minor to do the same. The reopening of the house

[1] *Vide* e.g. the Constitution of Odo, Bishop of Paris, concerning ignorant preachers. Harduin, *Acta Concil.* VI. p. 1945, no. 41.

[2] The doctrines of Amaury de Bena and David de Dinant had been but recently solemnly condemned, and in consequence the reading of Aristotle, whether in public or private, was forbidden (cf. Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartul Universit. Paris*, I. no. 11, p. 70; no. 12, p. 71; no. 22, p. 81).

[3] Cf. Denifle-Chatelain, loc. cit. no. 32, p. 90.

[4] Cf. Denifle, *Die Universitäten*, I. p. 708A.

at Bologna was preliminary to inducing Francis to consent to the opening of a theological school for the brethren.

From the summer of 1222 and throughout the following year it is evident that Francis had Bologna much in mind. On the feast of the Assumption, 1222, he was in the city and preached one of his unforgettable sermons in the great piazza before a vast crowd of citizens and students; and to the students it seemed a wonderful thing that a man unversed in the arts of the schools, should plunge so easily into the mysteries of religion and carry his audience along untrodden paths of thought as one at home there. Many of the students saw him for the first time, and they looked upon a small emaciated man in a patched unkempt garment, whose outward appearance was in strange contrast to his warm graceful eloquence as he discoursed to them on the duties and responsibilities of men who share with angels and devils the gift of reason.[1] Again, a little before Christmas, the city was startled by a letter which Francis had written to the brethren and which he ordered them to read in all the schools of the city. In it he foretold the great earthquake which shook all Lombardy on Christmas Day and for many days afterwards, and was remembered with terror in the years to come.[2] Yet

[1] Thomas of Spalatro, at the time a student at Bologna, has left a vivid pen-picture of Francis' appearance on this occasion. Cf. *Historia Pontificum Salonitanorum et Spalatinorum*, edited by Heinemann in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.* xxix. p. 580. Sigonius (*De Episcopis Bonon.* Opera Omnia, III. col. 432) took liberties with the text of Thomas of Spalatro and added the date 1220: and this date was accepted by later writers. But Heinemann makes it clear that this sermon was preached in the same year as the great earthquake at Brescia, which occurred on 25 December, 1222. Computing the year by the most common method, from 25 March, this places the sermon on 15 August, 1222; and this is the date now generally accepted. Cf. Golubovich, *op. cit.* p. 98: Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 106.

[2] Eccleston [ed. Little], col. VI. p. 40. Cf. Muratori, *Annali d' Italia*, ad an. 1222.

again he was at Bologna in the following April, when he preached to the people and predicted another earthquake which happened on the Good Friday.[1]

It is not unlikely that these visits to Bologna had some reference to the establishment of a theological school such as Cardinal Ugolino desired. At any rate the predestined man had now appeared in this very province of the Romagna, who was to bring this difficult question to some sort of solution. He was Brother Anthony, afterwards to be known as Saint Anthony of Padua.[2]

Anthony's appearance in history is somewhat in the nature of a romance, as is frequently the case with men of magnetic personality. He had become a Friar Minor, as we have seen, at the shrine of the martyred friars of Morocco in the church of the Canons Regular at Coimbra. His one desire then was to preach the Faith to the infidels and perhaps be martyred in the cause. But shipwreck and sickness brought him to Italy just before the time of the General Chapter of 1221 and he had found his way to the Chapter in the company of other friars. But when the brethren were dispersing to their provinces Anthony, an unknown friar and of a retiring disposition, was nearly being passed over when Gratiano,

[1] Cf. Fr. Barthol. della Pugliola, *Chron. di Bologna*, in Muratori, *Rerum Ital. Script.* XVIII. col. 254.

[2] Concerning Anthony of Padua, cf. *Vita Primitiva*, ed. Hilaire de Paris; also another version of the same legend in *Portugalliæ Mon. Hist. Script.* vol. I.; yet another version edited by Josa, *Legenda seu Vita et miracula sancti Antonii* (Bologna, 1883). Cf. Rigaldi, *Vita B. Antonii*, ed. by d' Auraules; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 121 *seq.*; Kerval, *S. Ant. de Padua. Vitæ duæ.*

For a critical examination of these early sources cf. Lepitre, *Saint Antoine de Padoue* (Paris, 1901); Bolland, *Acta SS.* Junii, die 13; P. Niccolo dal Gal, *S. Antonio di Padova* (Quaracchi, 1907); Hilarin de Luzerne, *Histoire des Études*, p. 139 *seq.*

the Minister-Provincial of Lombardy, invited him to join that province. As a priest he would be useful, Gratiano thought, to say Mass for the brethren in some solitary hermitage. So Anthony was sent to San Paolo in the mountains near Forli in the Romagna. There he gave himself to solitary prayer and to menial services amongst the brethren. No one suspected his wide reading of theology or his talent for preaching.

Gratiano and the friars in fact thought him a simple man with just enough knowledge of Latin to enable him to say Mass. But some months afterwards there was an ordination of priests at Forli and the brethren of San Paolo were bidden to be present. The brethren were all assembled in the house of the Order at Forli for their evening meal, with some Dominican friars as their guests; and after the collation the Guardian asked one of the Dominicans to address the community upon divine things. But not one of the guests would consent. Thereupon Anthony was ordered to speak in simple words as God should inspire him. He too excused himself, but the Guardian insisted. Then upon obedience he rose up and spoke and to their amazement the assembled brethren discovered they had harboured a genius in the guise of a simpleton.

Anthony was now torn, much against his will, from the retreat of San Paolo, and within a short while the people of the Romagna were awake to the new preacher who had risen suddenly amongst them.

There was that about Anthony which made his preaching distinctive. He had all the moral fervour of a penitential preacher; but to the heart aflame he added a clear argumentative intellect and a memory well stocked with the lore of Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. That was indeed

what those people in the Romagna needed in the way of preaching. Nowhere had the heretics gained ground more surely than in that province, and religion had taken an argumentative turn because of them.

The Cathari, who denied the authority of the Church and the validity of the sacraments and who held to the creed that the creation was in part of evil origin, were to be found everywhere, making adherents and bringing doubt into the minds of the people. For their authority they appealed to the Scriptures, the texts of which they expounded by that subjective method which was in vogue both amongst orthodox and unorthodox and which allows its disciples a free play of opinion or fancy in the interpretation: and so the Cathari were able to read their own tenets into any Scripture passage they chose, and to pass off their own tenets as the inspired word of Holy Writ. In fact they claimed to read anew the Scriptures in the light of enlightened reason.[1] Anthony, on the other hand, had mastered the Scriptures in the light of the Catholic instinct and patristic teaching. As he arrayed his texts they shone with the accumulated wisdom of the saintly Catholic teachers of the past: but the wisdom had become his own in his long meditative vigils and rapt spiritual experience. And so as he poured out the traditional teaching of those who had gone before him, it palpitated with the living conviction of his own heart. Strangely enough, seeing that he was regarded as "the hammer of heretics," his sermons were not of a controversial character: they might have been preached before a community of orthodox monks as appro-

[1] Cf. Felice Tocco, *L' Eresia nel Medio Evo*, pp. 128-9: "I perfetti cathari *parevano animati da una fede più razionale et più studiosi dei sacri testi*". One finds a similar instance of this style of interpretation amongst the Christian Scientists of to-day.

ANCIENT FRANCISCAN FRIARY
(Lo Sperimento, near Camerino)

priately as before a crowd in the cathedral or market-place.[1] As we have them in writing, they are discourses on the spiritual life rather than expositions of Catholic teaching meant to combat heretical views.

He was indeed of the race of the mystics and not of the dialecticians. His argument was fashioned not to display a logical consistency or inconsistency, but to convey some felt truth of the inner life, or some experience of faith. And after all, whether for the confuting of unbelievers or the confirming of believers, it is this manner of argument which sways the world.

Such was the friar whose eloquence had set the Romagna astir. Already at this time when Francis was preaching at Bologna, people were telling the story how at Rimini, where Cathari and Ghibellines had long made mockery of the Church and would not listen to the new preacher, Anthony had bidden them follow him to the sea-shore; and how when they came there, he had called to the fishes to hear the word of God; and how at his call the surface of the sea moved with the fish who rose up to listen whilst he preached.[2] But Anthony's miracles—and he was a singular wonder-worker—were but another form of his preaching, that is, an argument of the faith which was in him. Francis must have heard of the doings of this newly-known disciple who to the brethren seemed himself the greatest of his miracles; for never, they thought, had there been such a combination of learning and simple faith, of the majestic power of eloquence with such utter self-effacement.

[1] *Vide Opera Omnia S. Antonii*, ed. de la Haye (Parisiis, 1641), mostly a collection of sermons. Doubtless as they are written we have but the *schema* of his sermons; and in the actual delivery he may have made local applications which are not embodied in the text.

[2] Rigaldus (op. cit. p. 89) says this miracle occurred near Padua; but see Lepitre, cap. 4, Engl. transl. p. 62 *seq.*

Here then was the theologian after Francis' own heart. Later on when Anthony was appointed to teach theology, Francis addressed a letter to him beginning: "Brother Anthony, my bishop:" it was a compliment which came from the heart and from the glad reverence with which he welcomed him.

Anthony's appointment as lector of theology at Bologna was made probably during the winter of 1223. Francis then wrote to him: "It pleases me that you should read sacred theology to the brethren so long as on account of this study they do not extinguish the spirit of holy prayer as is ordained in the Rule".[1]

In after years there was a persistent tradition that before taking up the lectorship at Bologna, Anthony went to Vercelli the better to fit himself by study for the task imposed upon him. That city was the seat of a new theological school recently established in the abbey of San Andrea. Thomas Gallo, who presided over the abbey school, was, as all the world knows, a man of high repute amongst the learned theologians of his day. He was a disciple of the theological school of St. Victor in Paris, and himself the author of an exposition of the writings attributed to Denis the Areopagite. Whether Anthony, however, actually studied at Vercelli is doubtful; but this is certain, that he knew the

[1] Cf. Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 132; II Celano, 163. The exact reading of this letter has been a matter of doubt; hence the Quaracchi editors put it amongst the doubtful writings of St. Francis in their edition of the *Opuscula* (p. 179); so also does Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 71: but both regard the *substance* as authentic. The discovery of a copy of the letter in MS. de Leignitz seems, however, to put the authenticity beyond doubt. Cf. *Opuscules de Critique Hist.* tom. I. p. 76. The reference in the letter to the Rule proves that it was written after the promulgation of the Rule of 1223, as the words: "*Sancte orationis spiritum non extinguant*" are a quotation from the fifth chapter of that Rule.

master of the school and was on terms of friendship with him: for Gallo himself has written: "Many have penetrated into the secrets of the most holy Trinity, as I myself know by experience of Anthony of the Order of Minors in the friendly intercourse I had with him. He was but little versed in secular arts yet in a short while he became so conversant with mystical theology that aflame inwardly with heavenly love he outwardly shone with sacred knowledge." [1] No other testimony is needed to explain why Francis consented to Anthony teaching theology. If theology had to be taught, Anthony was the predestined teacher after Francis' own heart.

And no mere accident was it that drew Anthony into friendship with Thomas Gallo, but rather an affinity of spirit. The Victorine school of theology was mystical rather than dialectical. Though it did not ignore the speculative theology then coming into vogue, yet it subordinated this new method of thought to the positive teaching of the Fathers of the Church, and sought for the vision of truth rather than for its analysis.[2]

The mystic of all ages has held that life itself cannot be adequately measured by the mere logical faculty of the mind but only by the intuition of the whole personality when attuned to the truth by moral as well as mental discipline. With the purely dialectical school of theology the pure Franciscan spirit could never have come to terms: too wide a gulf separated this school of cold reasoning from the heart-

[1] E. Salvagnini, *S. Antonio di Padova e i suoi tempi* (Torino, 1887), p. 98. The author discovered this passage in an unedited manuscript of Gallo in the Turin Library. Another version is given in MS. de Leignitz, loc. cit. p. 76; Glassberger, *Anal. Franc.* II. p. 34; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 131.

[2] Cf. Hugon. de S. Vict. in Migne, *Bibliotheca*, tom. CLXXV.-CLXXVII.

governed temperament of the true sons of Poverty. In purely academic learning the soul of the Franciscan must ever be a stranger; its affinity is with the realities of life in which the whole spirit of man and not merely the intellect, grows and gains its liberty.

Much the same spirit urged the disciples of the school of St. Victor in their intellectual life. They sought for knowledge by the exercise of all the spiritual faculties: not only must a man read; he must work and pray. And out of the experience of life, knowledge would come, and the highest knowledge might be gained only in the highest experience, namely, the intimate union of the creature with God. In other words these mystics held that experience and love are the springs whence alone true knowledge can be drawn: to the logical faculty they gave but the subordinate function of arranging and formulating the knowledge thus acquired. In the Holy Scriptures and in the teaching of the Fathers of the Church they looked for the witness of that spiritual experience which is conserved in the Catholic Church by the Divine Spirit dwelling therein: but they held that this witness can be adequately apprehended only by the believing soul inflamed with love of the truth revealed.

With these mystical schools the Franciscan spirit was, as we have said, akin; and thither it might safely go to seek its mental stimulus and discipline, provided the friar kept in view just one point of difference between the learning desirable for a Friar Minor and that of the established schools. The difference was this. The Friar Minor was by vocation a missionary and apostle; he was set to bring the Gospel to the people either by word or by example. Even the mystic may become one of a class apart from the multitude of men in their spiritual life and wander into some by-path where the common cle-

mental experiences of men raise no call for sympathy or consideration. But to the mind of Francis, the Friars Minor must always keep a hold of the hand of all humankind in its striving after the spiritual life: they must form no aristocracy even in their sacred studies but keep intact their moral fellowship with the ignorant and unlearned. In their sermons and discourses they must speak simply and briefly so that the poorest and most ignorant people might understand and derive profit.[1] Moreover the most learned brother must be willing and able to set aside his learning and serve men, when need be, in common and menial service. Study, however sacred, must never displace that life of Poverty which implied a sympathetic understanding of the life of the poor whether spiritual, mental or material. These truths Francis insistently urged upon the learned brethren. Thus one day when a brother was cutting his tonsure, Francis bade him be careful to cut only a small tonsure, "for," he said, "I wish that my simple brethren should have a share in my head".[2] It was a warning to the brethren who were clerics that they must be such that the unlearned as well as the learned should be at home with them.

To the end Francis watched the formation of schools for the brethren with some trepidation of spirit. For Anthony and such as he, there was no cause to fear; but for the many others he feared lest the love of study should cause them to lose the simplicity of spirit which belonged to their vocation.

Of the later story of the Franciscan schools and their great influence on the development of thought in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, this is not the place to speak. Only here we will remark that their best influence was due to Francis' persistency that intellectual studies should

[1] Regula II. cap. IX. [2] II Celano, 193.

be subordinated to life itself and in no way lead them astray from the vocation which they had vowed. It was this which gave to the Franciscan schoolmen a certain marked individuality of thought and to the Franciscan preachers their peculiar power with the people: and that will be the justification of Francis in his opposition to Peter Stacia and his kind.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIAL OF FRANCIS.

The two years immediately following the General Chapter of 1221 may well be described as the agony of Francis. Like thunderclouds the troubles about the Rule descended upon his spirit, oppressing him with forebodings and weariness and despondency.

This was indeed the great trial of his faith in the Order he had founded, and even in the vocation in which he had led the brethren. In the early days his faith had been tested by the allurements and mockery of the world he had left; but then he had found in the trial the stimulating joy of a newly found love and loyalty. The future had lain before him as a caressing vision of hope and liberty; and as the years grew upon each other, this vision had justified itself in the formation of the fraternity and the beauteous lives of many brethren: and ever at the heart of Francis there was the deepening sense of joy until that doubt concerning the wisdom of his teaching had entered into the fraternity.

Then there came to Francis that vital pain which can come only to a man from the contradiction of the people he has nurtured and loved as his own life. The lightness and buoyancy seemed now to have passed from his spirit and a new note entered into his utterances. He was no longer the leader full of the thrilling assurance of victory and the loyalty

of his own following, whose words glow with confidence even when rebuking. He became as one bearing witness against betrayal and disloyalty.

To this soreness of spirit was added an increasing physical weakness and pain. He had returned from the East, broken in health, and the disease which within a few years was to end his life was already making life a torture.[1] But the physical pain he could have borne blithely enough: it was the mental suffering which brought black night into his soul. Hitherto he had seen so clearly the purpose of God in the formation of the fraternity; now it was as though God were withdrawing His guiding Hand and the powers of evil were let loose.

The immediate effect upon Francis himself was a certain restriction of that liberty of soul which had hitherto been so distinctive a trait of his character. He became acutely fearful of evil and wrongdoing. The Gospel liberty which he cherished as a condition of the service of love, he now saw beset with dangers from the incursion of a worldliness of mind which only too readily would wrest this liberty to the destruction of the Rule.

This haunting dread of evil now tinged his words and personal conduct with a harshness really foreign to his own spirit. Thus in the earlier days he had allowed the brethren to receive money in cases of necessity for the relief of the lepers; now he began to discourage this liberty, seeing how many of the brethren had not a firm faith in absolute poverty.[2] So too in his teaching concerning obedience a change is perceptible. Hitherto he had asked of the brethren an obedience

[1] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 91.

[2] Cf. II Celano, 68. The permission is retained in the Rule of 1221, but not in that of 1223.

founded in mutual charity, a submission to each other and to all men, warmed and transfused with the impelling activity of love. Now this jubilant note of self-submission is lacking. The obedient brother he likens to a corpse without will of its own, moved hither and thither by the will of others.[1] The emphasis is laid on the submission rather than on the charity which impels to submission.

Another instance of the change which had come over Francis was in his relations with the sisters at San Damiano. Regarding them as members of the fraternity of Poverty, he had for them a chivalrous affection as pure and detached from any earthliness as it was sincere. He was to them a gentle knight, succouring them in their needs and supporting them with his courage and counsel in the high path of their vocation. Between him and them there was the exalted intercourse of souls too utterly absorbed in a vision beyond themselves to entertain any lesser desire. So it had been since Clare first entered the brotherhood, and no thought that evil might come to others from this wise and noble intercourse, had darkened the soul of Francis. But now he was troubled lest in this too others might wrest the liberty of the children of God to their own spiritual harm.

He ceased therefore to visit the sisters. And it might easily have come about at this time that the sisters would have been entirely separated from the fraternity and left without the direction of the brethren even in spiritual matters had not Clare herself intervened to save the situation. With a woman's instinct she divined the trouble in Francis' mind and its probable consequences to herself and the sisters, and with a woman's courage she set herself to defend Francis against himself. Through some of the brethren she protested

[1] II Celano, 152; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 48.

against his self-imposed estrangement from San Damiano, setting forth that it was a betrayal of his promised care of them. In his pain Francis replied to those who brought the protest: "Think not, dear brethren, that I do not love them perfectly; for if it were a fault to cherish them in Christ, was it not a greater fault to have united them to Christ? And indeed it had been no wrong not to call them, but not to care for them when called were the utmost unkindness. But I am giving you an example, that as I am doing, so also should you do." In the end he was prevailed upon to visit the sisters and to preach to them. Yet even then the trouble was present: for whilst the sisters were waiting upon his words, he took some ashes and sprinkling them upon the ground around him and upon his head, he recited the psalm *Miserere* and immediately took his departure. But some say that Clare did not rest until she persuaded Francis to dine with her and some of the sisters in proof of his fatherly care for them.[1]

In his distress Francis now frequently withdrew from the larger company of the brethren and betook himself to secluded hermitages, where in solitary prayer he wrestled with the evil which had come upon him and the fraternity.[2] At times when reports were brought to him of brethren who were departing from the proper ways of the fraternity he would break out into bitter lamentation. Such reports were like the touch of a coarse hand to his raw spirit. Thus hearing one day that certain brethren were growing long beards out of a love of novelty, and it would seem to impress the people with an

[1] *Vide* II Celano, 205-7: The incident recorded in *Actus*, cap. 15, and *Fioretti*, cap. 15, should probably be read in conjunction with the passages cited from Celano. Doubtless the author of the *Actus* has embellished the story, but on general principles (*vide infra*, p. 520) we must accept the fact that Francis dined with Clare in token of the amity between them.

[2] II Celano, 157.

appearance of austerity, he uttered this cry to heaven: "O Lord Jesus Christ Who didst choose Apostles twelve in number, and though one of them fell, yet did the others cleave to Thee and, filled with one spirit, did preach the holy Gospel: Thou, O Lord, in this last hour, remembering Thy mercy of old, didst plant the religion of the brethren to be a prop to Thy Faith, that through them the mystery of Thy Gospel might be fulfilled. Who then shall make satisfaction for them before Thee, if they not only do not set examples of light to all men, for which purpose they were sent, but rather show forth the works of darkness? By Thee most holy Lord and by all the heavenly court, and by me thy poor little one, let them be cursed who by their evil example put to shame and destroy what Thou hast built up hitherto by the holy brethren of this Order and dost not cease to build up."[1] Of others he bitingly exclaimed: "These sons of a father who was a beggar, will not be ashamed some day to wear the scarlet cloth of gallants with only a change of colour".[2]

Yet it must not be thought that these traitorous brethren represented the whole fraternity, or that the dissident ministers carried with them all the brethren. Could the difficulty have been settled by an appeal to the loyalty of the brethren to the person of Francis, undoubtedly the greater number in the fraternity would have rallied to his side. But between Francis and the brethren there was now a legally organized system of government and many of the chief offices were in the

[1] II Celano, 156. Eccleston says that after the Chapter at which John Parenti was elected Minister-General, Brother Elias retired to a hermitage and allowed his hair and beard to grow, and that by this pretence of sanctity (*simulatio sanctitatis*) he regained the good-will of the brethren (cf. ed. Little, p. 81).

[2] II Celano, 69; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 15. In I Celano, 16, the same phrase is used referring to Francis in his youth: "*qui quondam scarlaticis utebatur*".

hands of dissident ministers, at least in Italy; and these were the more worldly-wise amongst the brethren and in their worldly wisdom lay their power. They too had their following.

Amongst those who adhered to Francis and the primitive ways, were some who blamed him for not dealing more cavalierly with his opponents: if Francis would only take the reins of government into his own hands and depose the dissident ministers, all would be well. Sometimes they would come to him and upbraid him for casting into strange hands the care of the fraternity. But Francis had gauged the situation better than they and he knew himself. To one who thus upbraided him he replied: "My son, I love the brethren as far as I can, but if they would follow in my ways I would indeed love them more, nor would I make myself a stranger unto them. But some there are amongst the superiors who draw them other ways, proposing to them the example of the ancients and esteeming my counsels but little; but in the end it will appear more clearly what they do and in what manner they are doing it."[1] Francis preferred wisely to let the recalcitrant ministers have their way for awhile, trusting that in the end their opposition would defeat itself by manifesting clearly its inherent worldliness. At another time when he was again urged to depose certain ministers who were clinging to office and abusing their trust, he answered: "Let them live as they like, for the damnation of a few is of lesser moment than the loss of many".[2]

For things eventually came to this pass that very easily might a schism have occurred in the fraternity. The line taken by the dissident ministers had brought about a cleavage of feeling and the brethren were now morally divided into two camps: those who stood by the primitive

[1] II Celano, 188; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 41. [2] *ibid.*

observance and those who favoured a more secular policy. Moreover, in the general disturbance there were some who lost all idea of subordination to authority and went their own individual ways in defiance of their superiors.[1] Nor was there now that union of heart amongst the brethren which in earlier days had made poverty joyous and lightsome. Quarrels and angry words were no longer unknown and there was a tendency to take life easily and to shirk labour.[2]

Undoubtedly the vast increase in the number of the brethren had much to do with this laxity of discipline. In such a multitude as they now were, it were impossible but that many would be drawn to the Order by the prevalent enthusiasm of the moment rather than by any real purpose of self-renunciation. The Order had become popular, which is always a danger to any religious society. Francis himself recognized the difficulty. "Would that there were fewer Friars Minor!" he once exclaimed, "and that the world seeing a Friar Minor but rarely should wonder at their fewness."[3] And yet he had felt constrained to open wide the door of the fraternity as Christ had opened wide the door of His Church.

This laxity of discipline on the part of some tended to complicate the issue between Francis and the ministers: it gave colour to the plea that the idealism of the Rule was too heroic for ordinary mortals and was an evidence to the ancient Rules which could be more easily enforced.

Never did the real strength of Francis show itself more splendidly than in the situation thus created. A weaker, less temperate man would have taken one of two lines of action.

[1] Cf. II Celano, 32; *Conformit.*, in *Anal. Franc.* IV. pp. 432-3. On 18 Dec. 1223, Honorius III issued the bull '*Fratrum Minorum*,' excommunicating those who left the fraternity (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 19).

[2] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 52; *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 445.

[3] II Celano, 70.

Either in despair of his own idealism he would have surrendered or he would have so set himself in opposition as to have produced a schism or even the total disruption of the fraternity. Francis did neither. Dear to him above all else was the vocation of Poverty; but as part of this supreme affection was his love of the brotherhood which he held to be the God-designed witness on earth to the Poverty he worshipped: and right loyally he strove by prayer and example and exhortation to keep it intact. True, if it could not be maintained in honourable fidelity to the evangelical observances of Poverty, he would rather that it were not maintained at all. And there were times when it seemed to him that it would come to this that the faithful servitors of the Rule would be driven from the community and be forced to seek the life of Poverty in secluded hermitages away in the forests and wildernesses.[1] In dread of this ultimate evil overtaking the Order, he made it known that should the body of the fraternity abandon the path of Poverty, the brethren who purposed to remain faithful might with his sanction and blessing separate from the faithless community and go and dwell apart. Thus a German friar once came to him with this petition: "If in my days the brethren turn aside from the pure observance of the Rule as thou, speaking by the Holy Ghost, hast foretold, give me thy command that I, alone or together with other brothers who wish to observe the Rule purely, shall draw apart from those who do not observe it". Francis listened with great joy; then blessed the brother, saying: "By Christ and by me, what you ask is granted you;" and placing his right hand on the other's head he added: "Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedeck".[2]

[1] *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 428.
[2] *Legenda Vetus*, cap. 3, in *Opuscules*, p. 96.

It is said that in his final Rule of 1223 he wished to insert a clause granting a like liberty to all the brethren in similar circumstances.[1]

But this liberty had reference to that ultimate calamity when the brethren should find their allegiance to the community a betrayal of the allegiance they owed the Rule. In such a situation Francis recognized but one honourable duty, allegiance to the Rule they had vowed. But short of this final calamity Francis counselled patience. Some there were amongst the more faithful brethren who would at once have separated from the party of the ministers and thus have broken up the fraternity. But to this suggestion Francis would not listen. Better, as long as may be, to suffer persecution at the hands of the ministers for justice sake: for he yet trusted that by this patient suffering the whole fraternity would be purified and brought back to its proper allegiance. So for the guidance of these suffering brethren he had this "admonition" written down: "If a prelate command a subject anything against his soul, it is lawful for the subject not to obey him, nevertheless the subject must not cast the prelate off; and if in consequence the subject suffer persecution from some, let him love them the more. For he who would rather endure persecution than wish to be separated from his brethren, truly abides in perfect obedience, since he lays down his life for the brothers." And knowing that there were some who would gladly separate, not so much for the sake of the better observance of the Rule but to follow their own will, he added: "For there are many religious who under the pretext of seeking better things than those commanded by their superiors, look back and return to the vomit of their

[1] *Vide infra*, p. 385.

own will. These are homicides and by their bad example cause the loss of many souls."[1]

As for himself, faithful to the vision of the Lord Christ, which was the light of his life, he met the opposition of the ministers and the unspiritual tendencies which were showing themselves amongst the brethren, with the same exalted patience and courageous meekness to which he exhorted others. When urged to use his legal authority and force observance of the Rule by penalties, he replied: "I am not minded to become an executioner to punish and scourge them like magistrates of this world: my office is spiritual only, namely to overcome their vices and spiritually to correct them by my words and example".[2]

At times indeed the native instinct of domination which in early years had made him aspire to be captain of a following, would assert itself, as when on an occasion he cried out: "If I come to the Chapter I will show them of what kind my will is".[3] But always he corrected himself by recalling the humility and meekness proper to a Friar Minor; as in this picture he drew of his proper conduct at the Chapter. "It

[1] Admonitio III in *Opuscula*, p. 7. Both in the Rule of 1221 and that of 1223 Francis inserted a regulation ordering the brethren who could not observe the Rule spiritually to have recourse to their ministers. "The ministers are to receive them kindly and charitably," etc. (Reg. 1223, cap. x.) This regulation evidently refers to those who need a greater liberty in the observance of the Rule, following as it does upon the command that the brethren obey their superiors "in all things they have promised the Lord to observe and which are not against their soul or our Rule".

Fr. Paschal Robinson in his translation of the Rule (cp. *The Writings of St. Francis*, p. 72) has inserted in brackets "the culprits," as though those having recourse had committed some fault; whereas the brethren having recourse as implied in this chapter of the Rule are the brethren desirous of more perfect observance. Cf. *Conformities* in *A.F.H.* pp. 422-3.

[2] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 71; *Scripta Fr. Leonis*, loc. cit. p. 97.

[3] II Celano, 188; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 41.

seemeth to me," he said to his companion, "that I am not a true Friar Minor save I be in the state I will tell you. Behold the brethren with great devotion invite me to the Chapter, and moved by their devotion I go to the Chapter with them. And when they are gathered together they beseech me to announce the Word of God unto them and preach among them. And rising up I preach to them as the Holy Spirit shall have taught me. Now suppose when the preaching is ended that all cry out against me: We will not have you reign over us; for you are not eloquent as is befitting, and you are too simple and unlearned and we are sore ashamed to have such a superior over us, so simple and despised: wherefore do not presume to be called our superior. And so they cast me out with contumely and disgrace. It seems to me I am no Friar Minor if I do not rejoice when they hold me of no account and cast me out with shame."[1]

Thus he would keep himself fast in the spirit of the vocation he had vowed. Not as the lords of the earth but as the suffering Christ, would he overcome the evil which had arisen up against him.

At the Pentecost Chapter of 1223 the question of a revised Rule was again discussed.[2] Not unlikely Cardinal Ugolino had persuaded Francis of the necessity of recasting the Rule with a view to obtaining the final and solemn approbation of the Holy See. It was becoming more and more urgent that the fraternity should have a Rule weighted with an authority none of the brethren could call in question.

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 64.

[2] *Cf.* Epistola III. "*Ad quemdam Ministrum*," in *Opuscula*, p. 109 *seq.* This letter was evidently written in 1223, it alludes to "chapters in the Rule which speak of mortal sins," viz.—chapters V. XIII. and XX. of the Rule of 1221, and suggests an amendment which actually appears in the Rule of 1223.

True, Innocent III had sanctioned the original Rule; but his verbal approval in its very nature left the Rule in a transitional stage, and gave the brethren a legitimate freedom to modify or extend its provisions as experience should require, and subject to ecclesiastical authority to alter its character. That fact the learned ministers, experts in canon law, knew full well. Moreover, as it stood with its many additional regulations, the Rule could hardly claim to have received Papal sanction. Its authority therefore was a matter of doubt and debate, and the fraternity was consequently without a final legal appeal within itself. It had been different in the earlier years when the brethren had accepted the word of Francis in unquestioning faith; but the governance by faith had now in large measure given place to the governance by law, and it was the more needful that the Rule should be definitely defined by the highest authority in the Church.

But from a legal point of view the Rule of 1221 was open to objection. It was too diffuse a document, a patchwork, as we have seen, of the original Rule and capitular decrees and papal enactments and of lengthy admonitions; and in its general character it set forth a prophetic vision of perfection rather than a workable code of discipline for the ordinary mortals who must enter into so vast a society: and without any doubt Cardinal Ugolino had urged upon Francis the need of giving to the Rule a more concise and legal form, such as the Holy See would require before giving its final approval.[1]

So once again Francis set himself to rewrite the Rule. Very tremulous was he at putting his hand to the Rule which

[1] Ugolino's part in the final revision of the Rule is plainly indicated in the bull "*Quo elongati*" of 28 September, 1230 (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 68): "*In condendo predictam regulam obtinendo confirmationem ipsius per Sedem Apostolicam, sibi astiterimus*".

he had already written, lest it should be like the irreverent touch of Oza upon the ark of the Lord. But one night whilst this trouble was upon him he dreamt that he had gathered from the ground tiny crumbs of bread with which to feed a hungry multitude of brethren. And so small were the crumbs that he feared lest in the distribution they would fall from his hands. Then a voice called out to him: Francis, make of all these crumbs one host and so feed those who wish to be fed. This he did: and as many of the brethren who would not receive the host, or, who having received, scorned it, were at once struck with leprosy. This dream puzzled Francis, for he felt that it was an answer to his prayer, and yet he could not tell its meaning. But the next day as he was again praying, he heard a voice, saying: "Francis, the crumbs of last night, are the words of the Gospel: the host is the Rule; the leprosy is wickedness".[1] Francis took his dream as a divine intimation that he must rewrite the Rule.

But for this task he would retire far from the clamorous multitude. Taking with him two companions, Brothers Leo and Bonizzo, he left the Porziuncola and went to a secluded spot in the mountains near Rieti, known as Monte Rainerio.[2] It was a wild rock-cavern far up the mountain side, reached by a precipitous pass. The mountain was densely wooded; the cavern overlooked a wild dingle which lay far below where a mountain-stream rushed down a strong course. On the brow of the mountain was a house belonging to the Lady Columba, a pious widow, who gave Francis the freedom of her moun-

[1] II Celano, 209; *Leg. Maj.* cap. IV. 2.

[2] It is now known as Fonte Colombo, which name, I was told when I was there, is derived from *Fundus Columbæ*, the estate of the Lady Columba. But in the *Speculum Perfectionis* the retreat of Francis on Monte Rainerio is named *Eremitorum de Fonte Columbarum* (capp. 67, 110, 115).

tain estate, and supplied him with food, whilst respecting his wish for solitude.

At Monte Rainerio nature is a veritable god of strength. There is in its aspect and in the view of the towering peaks which stretch away darkly into the Abruzzi, a sense of indestructible might, most impressive in its majesty: and the vast stillness of its solitude is as the stillness of a massive soul. Perhaps it was this which drew Francis to seek refuge there in this crisis of his great trouble: for never did he need strength more than now. The Rule was written, Francis praying and fasting meanwhile; and afterwards he returned to the Porziuncola and delivered what he had written to Brother Elias, the Vicar-General, that he might make it known to the ministers. Then happened a curious thing. After a few days Elias told Francis that the new Rule was lost through somebody's carelessness![1] A most strange carelessness surely; and one cannot but think that it was purposely destroyed, but whether by Elias or by some other, we cannot say. Nor does it matter who actually destroyed it: this only we can say without contradiction that Elias and the dissident ministers would have none of it. The new Rule, if shorter in form than the Rule of 1221, yet contained all the provisions to which the ministers objected. They clamoured that the brethren should be allowed to receive and hold sufficient corporate property to safeguard them against penury.[2] Other religious orders held

[1] *Leg. Maj.* IV. 11; cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 1; *Verba S. Franc.* no. 2, in *Documenta Antiqua*, ed. Lemmens, pars I. p. 101. St. Bonaventure says that Elias "asserted it was lost through carelessness"—"*assereret per incuriam perditam;*" but the *Spec. Perfect.* and the *Verba* simply say it was lost, without casting any blame upon Elias. It is not improbable that the first draft of the new Rule was written before the Pentecost Chapter, and that it was from Monte Rainerio that Francis wrote his letter "*ad quemdam ministrum*," above referred to.

[2] *Verba S. Franc.* loc. cit. p. 101.

property; why not they? Francis could but reply as he had always replied, that God had called them to follow Christ in the way of most high poverty such as he and the brethren had practised in the beginning, and that he would not prove a traitor to his calling.

Again Francis went back to his retreat on Monte Rainerio, sad at heart because of this persistent opposition, and again with prayer and fasting he dictated to Brother Leo[1] the new Rule. But the ministers, now thoroughly disturbed, pursued him to his solitude, protesting they would not observe the Rule as he had written it. Francis met them with a righteous indignation in which scorn blended with sorrow, and bade them if they would not observe the Rule to leave the Order.[2]

Now it is impossible to say exactly what rearrangement Francis made of the former Rule of 1221, in those suffering days on Monte Rainerio: for when the Rule was again written out he went with it to Rome to present it to Cardinal Ugolino before submitting it to the Pope for approval, and it is possible that it was then that the Cardinal persuaded Francis to omit certain regulations to which the ministers objected. Most notable in the Rule as finally sanctioned is the omission of the chapter of the primitive Rule approved by Innocent III, which says in the words of the Gospel: "When the brethren travel through the world let

[1] Cf. Ubertino da Casale, *Arbor Vitae*, lib. v. cap. 3: "*nam quod sequitur a sancto fratre Conrado predicto et viva voce audivit a sancto fratre Leone qui presens erat et regulam scripsit*".

[2] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 1; *Verba S. Franc.*, loc. cit. pp. 101-2. See the account given in the *Actus S. Franc.* in *Valle Reatina*, a fifteenth century document, and published by M. Sabatier in *Legenda Antiquissima*, pp. 255-61. Cf. *Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* iv. p. 516; Angelo Clareno, *Expositio Regulae*, fol. 43 b.

them carry nothing by the way, neither bag nor purse, nor bread, nor money, nor a staff," etc.[1] This evangelical admonition had more than any other been the formative influence of the Franciscan vocation; it was the most complete expression of that sublime trust in the providence of God, upon which the life of the fraternity was established, and from its observance came most of the characteristic traits in the primitive Franciscan story.[2] Francis would not willingly have deleted such a chapter, and it could only have been at the Cardinal's urging that he was prevailed upon to do so; and to overcome the scandal of the ministers' opposition.[3] After all the Cardinal might point out, the Rule commanded absolute poverty, and in that precept this other was essentially contained.

Other precepts Francis wished to insert in the new Rule which the ministers would not have. There was, for instance, a precept concerning the reverence due to the Blessed Sacrament. If the brethren on their journeys through the world should find the Blessed Sacrament reserved in unbecoming pyxes or tabernacles they were to admonish the priests to make a more honourable provision, and if the priests failed, the brethren were to do this in their stead. In practice such a rule would undoubtedly have caused friction between the friars and the clergy.[4] But whether these regulations were omitted in the draft of the Rule which Francis brought with him from Monte Rainerio or were afterwards deleted, we cannot say. One chapter in the new Rule, however, seems to have been changed whilst it was under the examination of

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 105.

[2] Cf. e.g. 3 Soc. cap. 11; *Chron. Jordani*, in *Anal. Franc.* I, no. 6, p. 3.

[3] "*Quia valde timuit scandalum in se et in fratres*," says the *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 2.

[4] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 65.

the Holy See. Francis, in the tenth chapter, had given licence and obedience to the brethren to observe the Rule literally, even against the wishes of the ministers. But the Pope caused this chapter to be amended in this wise, that whilst the liberty to observe the Rule is retained, the obligation to grant this liberty rests with the ministers, and the liberty is not at the discretion of the subjects themselves.[1]

And so after much patient travail of body and spirit on the part of Francis the new Rule was at last completed. As one reads it, one misses the exuberance of admonition and aspiration which were native to Francis: it is as though his spirit had been chastened. Of the essential principles of the vocation he surrendered nothing. The new Rule still binds the brethren to absolute poverty; postulants on entering the fraternity must first distribute their goods to the poor; the brethren must be content with poor garments; they must be peaceful and humble and refrain from judging others; they must work, yet so as not to extinguish in themselves the spirit of prayer, and in cases of necessity they must go asking alms with confidence; they must not own any house or lands or anything else but be as pilgrims and strangers in this world.

All through it is still the same life set forth as of old:

[1] Cf. *Legenda Vetus*, 2°, in *Opuscules de Critique*, I. pp. 93-5. Already in the Rule of 1221 (cap. 6) it was laid down that the brethren who could not observe the Rule in some particular place should have recourse to the minister who was bound to provide for the brethren "*sicut ipse vellet sibi fieri*". Practically the same regulation appears in the Rule of 1223, but with this difference. The wording of the latter Rule, both as it bears on the liberty of the subject to have recourse and also on the duty of the minister to listen to the petition, is more emphatic. This more emphatic wording of the Rule of 1223 is in favour of the authenticity of the story told in *Legenda Vetus*. Cf. *Hist.* VII. *Trib.* in Ehrle, *Archiv.* III. p. 601.

only, as we have said, set forth in a more chastened mood. Yet, wrought as it was in the crucible of sorrow and heart-pain, the Rule had gained perhaps a certain strength and durability even if it had lost something of its inspiring idealism. We may say that it gives us more purely the essential Francis of all time if less of the historical Francis of a particular period. And with every law-giver whose law is a reflex of his own life, it is needful that the more essential self be separated from its immediate and transitory expression: so only will his law endure: and this separation is usually wrought in the fire of contradiction. So was it with Francis.

The Rule was solemnly approved by Pope Honorius III on 29 November, 1223.[1]

Were the recalcitrant ministers satisfied? It would seem not. Elias, the Vicar-General, as we know, refused to consider himself bound by it, claiming in after times that he had not made any profession of it:[2] and some of the ministers so interpreted it as to cause Francis sorrow even to the end of his life.

But now there gradually settled upon the spirit of Francis a great peace. Finally and irrevocably he had vindicated the right of absolute poverty for the children of God.

One day as he was still sorrowing over the false brethren there came to his spirit this comfort from the Lord Christ: "O poor little man, why are you distressed? Have I so set you a shepherd over My religion that you know not that I am its chief Protector? I set over it you, a simple man, to the end that those who will, may follow you in those things I work in you for an example to others. It is I who have

[1] The text will be found in Sbaralea, *Bull.* i, pp. 15-19; *Seraph. Leaslat. Textus*, pp. 35 *seq.*

[2] Eccleston [ed. Little], col. xiii. p. 85.

called them; I who will keep and feed them; and I will make good the falling away of some by putting others in their place, in such wise that if these others be not born I will cause them to be born. Be not therefore perturbed but work out thy salvation; for even if the religion should come to but three members, yet through My gift shall it remain unshaken."[1]

Another time as he was praying in the chapel of the Porziuncola, this word came to his spirit: "Francis, if thou wilt have faith as a grain of mustard seed, thou shalt bid a mountain remove and it shall remove". Francis asked: "Which is the mountain I should wish to remove?" The interior voice replied: "The mountain is thy temptation". And in tears Francis said: "Be it done unto me, Lord, as Thou hast said".[2]

Thus was his spirit renewed in peace as when a man has battled with a great terror and the terror has vanished. Suffering did not pass from him, nor did the doings of the recalcitrant brethren commend them to him. Much that was passing in the life of the fraternity was to him as a dim mystery. But the fraternity, itself the pledge of the truth of that revelation of Poverty which was his life, would endure in the keeping of God: and with that assurance he was content. And now it remained for him to complete in himself this work of God, to the glory of Christ and as an example to those who willed to follow him.

[1] II Celano, 158; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 8; *Leg. Maj.* cap. VIII. 3.

[2] Celano, 115; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 99. This "temptation of the spirit" which lasted "several years" according to Celano, and "more than two years" according to the *Speculum Perfect.*, evidently from the context happened in Francis' later years, and most likely was concerned with his troubles with the ministers.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

"GRECCIO."

Passing from the valley of Spoleto into the valley of Rieti to the south, the traveller is at once conscious of being in a new country, notwithstanding that in the maps the high mountain-bound district of Rieti is marked as a portion of Umbria.

There is a certain aloofness both in the character of the land and of the people; an aloofness not at all unkindly. On the contrary, you will find there a genial hospitality, a desire to make the stranger at home. Yet is there a certain princely air in the way Rieti dispenses of its best, such as you frequently find amongst unconquered people of the hills. The ravages of war and foreign domination and incessant rebellion have not lain so heavily upon this upland valley as upon the more populous and suave valley of Spoleto to the north: though Rieti too has seen foreign armies march through its mountain passes and along its open roads. But Rieti is somewhat apart from the main thoroughfares of the world, safeguarded by its height above the more level roads and by its natural ramparts of pass and peak. Nevertheless it is not too far apart. Through it in former days ran one of the main roads from Rome to the north: and in its city the Popes had a palace

and held court there when they sought a nerve-bracing atmosphere away from the sultriness of Rome. But you feel sure, as the genius of the place comes home to your consciousness, that even Popes were welcomed here with a certain sturdy simplicity, and that the Rietans, whilst able to appreciate the splendour and vivacity of the court, yet held to their mountain valley with a certain proud content. The court might come and go, a shadow from the outer world; but the mountains and the valley were always there. It is strange how this sense of seclusion with mystic affinities to the world-life, grows upon you. Coming from the north, you are met at the very entrance to the hill-passes which divide the two valleys, by the boisterous waterfalls at Marmore, where the river Velino rushes down in a cloud of spray from the plateau beyond the hills into the lowland around Terni. If you have dwelt long enough in the valley of Spoleto to absorb something of its historical reminiscences, and to feel the intensity and strength of the human life that has played its part there, you will suddenly halt at the rushing sound and majestic force of the waters; for the moment you will be conscious that here is a new force, the force of nature, and as you look to the wall of hills beyond, the awe of that mysterious incalculable strength comes upon you. Then through a mountain-gorge you come to the Lago di Piediluco —or as the Franciscan chronicler calls it, the Lake of Rieti —closely enfolded by steep broken hills above which and beyond you see the mountains ranging away to the clustering snow-capped peaks of the Abruzzi. A sailing boat is leisurely making its way across the still waters of the lake as I pass by: probably the boatman dwells in one of those white villages on the shore.

Through the low hills you enter the upland valley, a wide

cultivated amphitheatre closely engirdled by the massed mountains. The plain is flat save for a hillock here and there which you might take for a sheltering island when the mists lie on the ground. Far to the south is the gleaming city: but inexorably your eye will be drawn to the encompassing mountains with their dark gorges and shadowy hollows and the occasional village clinging trustfully to some steep ascent. There is a great stillness in the bracing atmosphere, and a curious sense of seclusion. You miss the long mysterious distances of the valley of Spoleto, which to north and south sweep past the sentinel hills; you miss the fortress-cities and towns which make the great northern valley quick with the reminiscences of struggle and ambition: you miss the grey, treeless mountains which lie facing each other in two drawn-out lines, bidding each other a mutual defiance even in their rest. For here in Rieti the massed hills and mountain peaks seem as brothers-in-arms guarding the plain which they encircle, as men guard the sanctity of their home. So jealously do they encircle it that you can hardly detect the passes which lead to the outer world; yet withal do they guard it tenderly. On all the lower slopes the eye delights in the foliage of woods or in a blossoming soil. Rugged and stony are the primitive paths by which you climb the hills, yet they lead to homesteads set in the midst of olives or of vines: and in all the valley the air is at once soft and bracing. In truth in this upland cloister, nature has sought to bind men to herself by a manifold attraction: revealing at once her majesty and dire strength, her solicitude and providence, her lightsomeness and homeliness: as though by this varied revelation of beauty she would bring to them a complete detachment from the world beyond. No wonder that the peasant is strong

and blithesome, and that with a kindly humanity clearly indicated in his face and speech there is yet in his air a certain detached dignity and other-worldliness as of the mountain peaks above him. Nor do we wonder that Francis frequently sought shelter in this valley of Rieti amidst the stress and distractions of his busy apostolate; nor that in the years of his great trouble it was hither he came to nerve himself for endurance and battle. And fitting, too, it was that this wide upland retreat should be associated intimately with those last years when with the expectancy of death in his mind, the clamours of the world were no longer able to disturb the deep peace which had now come to him.

When Francis left Rome after the solemn approbation of the Rule by Honorius III, he felt that the supreme act of his ministry had been accomplished. He knew that in many ways the simplicity of the first years was gone; but so far as he could, he had secured for all who loved the vocation of poverty, the liberty to follow it with the supreme sanction of the Church. And now he felt that beyond setting the good example, his task was finished: and in his new freedom he turned all-desiringly to the life hidden with Christ his Lord. From this time the world of men will but little disturb the soul of Francis: more and more he will be drawn into the embrace of the Beloved, and the voices of the earth will reach his spirit only through that mystic life which is the borderland of eternity.

Christmas was now at hand. It was only two weeks to the sweet festival, and Francis was again in the valley of Rieti, probably in his rock-cell on Monte Rainerio; and thither he had invited a friend, Giovanni da Vellita,[1] to come

[1] S. Bonaventure (*Leg. Maj.* cap. x. 7) describes Giovanni as: "*Miles*

to him. Giovanni lived at Greccio a few miles northward as you follow the road which leads to the lake. He had some years earlier met Francis out on one of his preaching tours, and had fallen under the spell of his spirit, and become one of his informal disciples. He was a man of some substance and owned land in his native district, and because he wished to induce Francis to dwell occasionally in the neighbourhood and also because he knew of Francis' love of solitary retreats, he had set aside for his use some caves in the high rock facing the town of Greccio and had built a rude hermitage such as Francis loved, around the caves, where some brethren might dwell. Now the town of Greccio is constructed as it were on a high rocky ledge within a wide hollow. It looks down upon comfortable homesteads and vineyards sheltered from the north wind by the bare mountain steeps. At the bend of the hollow opposite the town the bare rock falls perpendicularly to the lower slopes several hundred feet below. At the head of the rock is the hermitage given to the brethren by Giovanni; but around the hermitage above the sheer fall of rock, the bareness of the mountain is relieved by warm sheltering woods.

Francis knew the hermitage well, and now he had a longing to celebrate the Christmas festival there. In the peace which had come back to his soul, the world was again transfigured with sacramental types; and as he pondered this Advent season upon the mystery of Bethlehem, never before had he seemed to thirst so vehemently for the vision of Christ on earth. The sweetness of this Divine condescension had entered into his soul with a vital urgency, in spirit he gazed

quidam virtuosus et verax, qui propter Christi amorem secularem vitam vitat." From this one might deduce that Giovanni was a Penitent Brother, or as we say now, a tertiary.

THE FRIARY OF GRECCIO

upon the love-illumined poverty of the birth of his Lord: and he longed even for bodily vision of what he had spiritually divined. In earthly form he would that he might behold this love-mystery, and thus wed heaven to earth in his apprehension of it: thus would God become again a dweller amongst the things of time.

So when Giovanni came, Francis said to him: "I would make a memorial of that Child Who was born in Bethlehem and in some sort behold with bodily eyes the hardships of His Infant state, how He lay in a manger on the hay, with the ox and the ass standing by. If you will, we shall celebrate this festival at Greccio and do you go before and prepare as I tell you". Giovanni therefore went back to Greccio and in the wood near the hermitage he had a stable built, with a manger: and near the manger an altar. And Francis sent word to all the brethren in the valley of Rieti to join him at Greccio for the Christmas festival.

Christmas eve came, and as the time for the midnight Mass drew near, the people from the town and from the hollow, all flocked to the hermitage, carrying with them lighted torches which flicked weird shadows against the hill-side as men and women strode sturdily on: and when they gathered in a crowd around the stable all that side of the hollow seemed ablaze. Francis was the deacon at the Mass, his ministrations enthused with the rapture and solicitude of the Mother tending her Babe. But when after the Gospel he stood forth to preach, the crowd felt as though a hidden mystery was in very deed being revealed to their eyes: so subtly did the preacher convey to them his own vision of Bethlehem and set them throbbing with his own emotions.[1] He seemed

[1] Fr. Paschal Robinson thinks Francis gained his special devotion to the Christmas mystery whilst on his visit to the Holy Land. It is very probable.

not to be conscious of the crowd before him, but to see only the Divine Babe in His mother's care, caressed by poverty and worshipped by simplicity. Tenderly he greeted the Divine Infant, calling Him "Child of Bethlehem" and "Jesus" and as he uttered the words, they lingered on his lips with surpassing sweetness; and at the word "Bethlehem" he bleated forth the music of the name as though he were voicing the worship of the sheep on the Judean hillside. At times he would turn to the manger and bend over it caressingly. Giovanni, the builder of the crib, afterwards averred that he saw a child lying as it were dead in the manger, who awakened to life at Francis' touch. But all the people believed that that night Greccio had become another Bethlehem.[1]

During the remaining days of that winter and far into the early spring, Francis would seem to have abided in this rocky hermitage; not altogether, however, withdrawn from the company of men. For the same love which drew him ever nearer to Christ the Beloved in solitude, sent him forth again to impart to his fellow-men the gospel of Christ's redeeming love. By the people of Greccio and the neighbourhood he was revered as teacher and prophet. Many were the

[1] I Celano, I, xxx. 84-86; II Celano, II, vii. 35; S. Bonav. *Leg. Maj.* cap. x. 7. S. Bonaventure says that Francis had previously obtained the Pope's permission to construct the crib, "*ne hoc novitati posset ascribi*". From this it would seem that the "crib," in the form now so familiar in Catholic churches at Christmastide, was not then known, at least in Italy. Nativity "representations," however, were known in France and England in the twelfth century and formed part of the liturgical service on Christmas night in certain Cathedrals. A *Representatio Pastorum* is mentioned in Lichfield Statutes, *circa* 1190. (Cf. *Lincoln Cathedral Statutes*, ed. Bradshaw and Wordsworth, part II. pp. 15, 23.)

Shortly after Francis' death a chapel was built on the site of the crib. The chapel still exists; near it is a larger chapel built somewhat later. Recently a new church has been built overshadowing the rude simplicity of the ancient hermitage with ambitious modernity.

stories which in after years these grateful folk told of his doings amongst them, how he delivered them from the ravages of wolves and from pestilences which had brought dread and sorrow into their homes, and from the hailstorms which had beaten down their vineyards, and so had given them a period of happiness; and how this happiness had continued as long as they remembered to serve God as Francis had taught them, but was taken from them again when they forgot his teaching and went back to evil ways.[1] They remembered, too, how on one occasion he had suddenly left them and set out for Perugia, the proud city to the north. For Francis had learned in prayer that the Perugians were letting armed bands loose upon their neighbours in very lust of strife and domination: and in his compassion he hurried forth to end the misery. But the people of Perugia would not listen to his appeal. Then did Francis foretell that within a short while they would be at feud amongst themselves and that sorrow and death should come upon them. And so it befell.[2] But this story probably belongs to an earlier period in Francis' history.

Thus now in active ministry for souls, now in prayerful seclusion, did Francis find his peace—the peace of absorption in the life of the God-Man who had drawn to Himself all the desire of His worshipping disciple. To be with Christ, whether in Bethlehem or Nazareth or on the public road or on the cross of Calvary—that had long been all his thought; and now he seemed to be entering into a realization more intimate than even he would have dared to ask for. Love had

[1] Cf. II Celano, VII. 35, 36.

[2] II Celano, II, VII. 37. The Perugians were constantly fighting amongst themselves. W. Heywood (*A History of Perugia*, pp. 35-7) mentions three notable civil wars, respectively in 1214, 1218 and 1223.

regained its liberty in his soul and with all the purer ardour and fullness because of the night of trial in which his faith had been tested. And here in the homely neighbourhood of Greccio he was tasting the first sweets of his liberty regained.

The Easter festival found him still in this sacred retreat. Amidst all the glorious hopes of the life to come with which the mystery of that day filled the soul of Francis, his heart turned clingingly to the earthly price by which they were won. Heaven had been gained for men only through the self-effacement of Him who being the world's God, yet made Himself a mere stranger and pilgrim upon the earth: and in the urgency of his love Francis in spirit was a pilgrim with his Lord.

Coming to the refectory of the brethren on that Easter day, he found the table laid with unwonted luxury—with table-cloths and cut-glass and the other appointments of a comfortable home, lent for the occasion by some friend of the brethren, for the brethren had thought to honour the festival in this fashion. But this symbolism of an abiding home was out of accord with Francis' vision of his pilgrim Lord. Gently yet emphatically did he therefore play the part of the pilgrim-Christ. Waiting till the brethren had begun their meal, he appeared at the door of the refectory, with a poor man's hat on his head and a staff in his hand, pilgrim wise: and called out: "For the love of the Lord God give alms to this poor sick pilgrim". The brethren hearing the call, bade him enter. Then Francis took a dish from the table and after the manner of a lowly servitor, sat on the ground. "Now I am seated like a Friar Minor," he said, addressing the abashed assembly. "When I saw the table so well laid and adorned, I bethought me that it was

not the table of men who beg their bread from door to door. More than all other religious should we be constrained by the poverty of the Son of God." And the brethren, at least some of them, took the lesson to heart; one of them even wept aloud: for it seemed to them that like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Christ had been with them and yet they had not known Him.[1]

In truth, to the eyes of those who were with him and who loved him, Francis was at this time being caught up more and more into the semblance of Him whom his soul loved; and more and more the earth they trod with him became transfigured in their thought, as though they were indeed living with the Lord Christ Himself in His sojourn upon the earth: so irresistibly were they compelled by Francis' own absorption to walk in the company of the Lord. Perhaps to those of them who had stood by and ministered to him in his days of trial, there came a sense of loneliness as they felt his spirit being thus withdrawn from the need of their ministrations by the caress of the Divine Love, and a sweet sadness would at times mingle with their worshipful reverence: for they knew they could but stand at the door of the sanctuary into which he was entering. And yet because they loved him so well their hearts would be uplifted with a triumphant gladness: and after all he was yet so near them. Amidst the homesteads and sheltered ways of Greccio and the Rieti plateau they could not but feel that he was in an

[1] Cf. II Celano, 61; *Leg. Maj.* cap. VII.; *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 20. In the *Spec. Perfect.* this incident is related as happening on a Christmas day; but Celano and St. Bonaventure both put it at the Easter festival and point to the motive indicated in the text. It is not at all improbable, as M. Sabatier has suggested (l.c. p. 41, n. 1), that similar incidents happened on other occasions; for Francis never hesitated to repeat himself. Cf. II Celano, 200.

intimate sense at home with them. And when the time of the Pentecost Chapter drew nigh and they must sally forth once again into the world's highway, they doubtless looked with impatient expectancy to a coming back to Greccio.

Francis was indeed to return to the valley of Rieti; but not immediately. That was to happen in the meanwhile which would put a wondrous seal upon his transfiguration: and when he did return, Brother Leo, his faithful friend and disciple, understood better the mystery which had been brooding over Francis during those winter months of peace.

CHAPTER II.

THE STIGMATA.

It was in the month of September that the mysterious event occurred which was to set indelibly the seal of his life's passion upon the body of Francis as it was already set upon his soul.

About the middle of June he had attended the Pentecost Chapter[1] —a Chapter to be noted by Englishmen inasmuch as Brother Agnellus of Pisa, a man altogether after Francis' own heart, was then commissioned to establish the Order of Friars Minor in England. The story of the coming of Agnellus and his brethren has been many times retold in these later days; and how with skilful impetuosity they pushed on before the close of the year to Canterbury, London, and Oxford, and won from the inhabitants a cordial and abiding place for the friars in their midst.[2]

They landed at Dover on the tenth day of September,

[1] Pentecost fell in 1224 on 11 June.

[2] Cf. Eccleston, *De Adventu FF. Min. in Angliam*, first published by Brewer in *Mon. Franciscana*, I. after the Cotton and York codices. A fragment after the Lamport codex was published by Howlett in *Mon. Franciscana*, II. An edition based on these published texts was published in *Analecta Franciscana*, I.; and a new edition was published in *Mon. Germ. Script.* XXXIII. But the definitive edition has been given by Prof. A. G. Little in *Collections des Études*, tom. VII. Cf. also "*The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston*," translated by the present writer; *The Coming of the Friars*, by Dr. Jessop.

1224;[1] they heard the bells of Canterbury calling the people to Mass on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, four days later; and perhaps to the heart of Agnellus keeping an early vigil, there came some intimation of the miracle which was happening to him whom he loved so well.

Not by fortuitous chance had Francis some time before the feast of the Assumption of our Lady, gone to Monte Alvernia, the high mountain retreat which the lord Orlando had many years before set apart for the use of the brethren. Something there was in his soul which made him wistful for the uttermost seclusion: and for the seclusion of great height.

For the time the sweet homeliness of Greccio would have been an imprisonment to his soul, and the battle-training atmosphere of Monte Rainerio would have jarred with the sense of the mystery which was upon him. His spirit was drawn to a rarer atmosphere; it called for a sublimer aloofness from the world of men. So to Monte Alvernia Francis now went, which is so far apart from and above the world's highways, and where the silence is of the skies and the very air so keen and rare.

Even to-day when a good road has been built to carry the pilgrim up the long ascent and a spacious friary crowns the

[1] Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1220) following the Chron. XXIV. Gen., says Agnellus was sent to England by the Chapter of 1219, and actually arrived in 1220. But Eccleston says distinctly: *Anno Domini MCC IIII° tempore domini Honorii pape . . . feria 3ª post festum nativitatis beate Virginis quod illo anno fuit die dominica.* Cf. Eccleston (ed. Little), p. 3. Both the Chronicle of Lanercost [ed. Stevenson, p. 30] and the Annals of Worcester [*Annales Monast.* IV. p. 416], give the same year 1224, as Eccleston. The probability therefore is that Agnellus was actually commissioned by the Chapter of 1224 and not by the Chapter of 1219, since he would hardly have allowed five years to elapse before fulfilling his commission: such a delay would have been in disaccord with the custom of the brethren.

summit, Alvernia is awe-inspiring in its remoteness from the meeting-places of the world. Far away are towns and villages which are but blurs in the landscape below. A rich foliage clothes the lower heights, giving comfort to the plain; but above this the mountain-sides are bare and rocky, desolate of human comfort: only on the top do the trees again appear, casting a grateful shadow in the sunlight. And all around, as far as the eye can see, are towering peaks gazing upon the sky; a multitude they are, yet with wide distances between as though each were strong to stand alone in the wide encompassing space: and, as we have said, the air is keen and there is the silence of great height.

To accompany him on his journey and to be the companions of his vigil, Francis chose only his most trusted disciples. There was Leo, the little lamb of God, most trusted of all; there were besides, Angelo Tancredi, the courteous knight, and Masseo the friend of many journeys, and Ruffino and Silvestro the contemplatives, and Illuminato who had been with him in his crusade in the East, and, as I think, Bonizzo, who had tended him in his trial at Monte Rainerio.[1]

As yet however he was wholly unaware of the happening which was to be: this only he knew, that the aspiration of long years was receiving a fulfilment and that a new revela-

[1] Bonizzo was cited as a special witness to the stigmata by John of Parma at the General Chapter of Genoa (cf. Eccleston, ed. Little, coll. XIII. pp. 93-4). Eccleston does not say he was actually with Francis on Monte Alvernia, but we know that he was one of Francis' companions in his last years. Eccleston tells us that Ruffino was on Monte Alvernia at the time of the stigmata (l.c.); Leo, Masseo, Angelo and Illuminato are named in the *Fioretti*, *Delle sacre sante Stimate*, III. Consid. Silvestro is mentioned in *L' Addio di san Francesco*. St. Bonaventure (*Leg. Maj.* XIII. 4) also mentions Illuminato. *Vide infra, passim.*

tion of the Lord Christ was upon him. On the day of his arrival he had chosen a cell apart from the cells of the other brethren; a rude hut under a beech tree. Here he proposed to submit himself to the will of his Lord, undisturbed by human intrusions: only Brother Leo was to come to him at stated times to bring him a little bread and water for his bodily refreshment and to assist him spiritually with priestly ministrations. The other brethren were to abide apart, to comfort him with their prayers and to keep secular folk who might visit the spot, from approaching the "secret bower" where God was communing with His servant.[1]

Now began that series of Divine manifestations which was to make Alvernia a holy mountain in the eyes of the Christian people.

One day as Francis was standing by his cell under the beech tree and wondering at the curious conformation of the mountain which at its summit is split into great fissures by some momentous cataclysm, Francis was rapt in prayer. "Then," says a chronicler, "it was revealed to him by God that these fissures so wonderful, were miraculously wrought in the hour of Christ's passion when as the Evangelist says, the rocks were rent asunder."[2] From that moment Alvernia was holy ground to Francis: it became to him a speaking witness to the Passion of his Lord. And with this intimation there came to him some dim understanding of the mystery in his soul: and thereat his soul grew more aflame with love of his Crucified Master: and from this time he became more insensible to the external world and more rapt in contemplation. Oftentimes Brother Leo coming to visit him would find him in ecstasy lifted above the earth, his body yielded to the impulse of the spirit; and then Leo's soul would overflow

[1] *Fioretti, Delle sacre sante stimate,* II. Consid. [2] *Fioretti,* loc. cit.

with affection and reverence and at times drawing nigh timidly he would kiss the feet of Francis, beseeching God, as he did so, to have mercy upon his own unworthiness and in spite thereof to give him a share in Francis' grace.

But one day when the feast of the Assumption drew near, Francis bade Leo go and stand at the door of the oratory of the brethren; and himself going to a distance, he called to Leo who at once responded. Whereupon Francis went still further away and again called to Leo, and this time Leo did not hear the call. Then coming back, Francis told Leo that he proposed to abide during the approaching Lent of St. Michael, which begins the day after our Lady's feast, in a more secluded spot near where he had stood when Leo could not hear his call. The spot chosen was on a ledge of rock which stood out from the body of the ground, divided from it by a deep chasm. On the other side the rock falls sheer down a hundred feet or more to the sloping ground. They bridged the chasm with a plank and constructed a wicker cell and then Francis gave Leo and the other brothers his instructions for the guarding of his retreat. None were to come nigh save Leo who was to bring him a portion of bread and water each day and to come again at the midnight hour for matins: but even Leo must not cross the bridge over the chasm unless Francis answered his signal; and the signal was these opening words of the matins-service: *Domine labia mea aperies.* And if Francis did not reply Leo must go away quickly and not cross the bridge.[1]

Alone on his rocky ledge, Francis now entered into that purgatory of the soul which precedes the more intimate unions of man with God. At times his spirit would be oppressed and the powers of evil would seem to be let loose

[1] *Fioretti*, loc. cit.

to torment him even with bodily violence, testing the tenacity of his spirit. It was the ultimate temptation of the strong, when evil is no longer felt as a personal weakness but as an objective reality, the more terrifying because so foreign to one's own desire. Then it is that the soul most needs unwavering faith and trust in the reality of the heavenly good: to stand firm in such temptation is man's highest act of worship, the complete submission of himself to God. In such temptation the body suffers even with the spirit and the whole man is cast into the crucible. So was it now with Francis. Once when Leo came to him Francis held him in conversation, seeking comfort: "If the brethren did but know," he pathetically exclaimed, "how many and how grievous are the anguishes and afflictions which the devils work upon me, there is not one of them but would be moved with pity and tenderness towards me."[1] But alternating with combat and suffering, there came to Francis moments of clear vision when heaven opened to him its secret, and at times the very sweetness of the life eternal entered into his soul and filled him with ravishing joy. One day as he was meditating upon the joy of the Blessed and thirsting for a share in it, there appeared to him an angel of God in great splendour. A spirit of music it must have been, for with a viol which he carried, he uttered music of such sweetness, that Francis lost all bodily sense.[2]

Nor must we forget to relate how in his solitude Francis was much comforted by the friendship of a falcon whose nest was near his cell. For the falcon attached itself to him, abiding near him in his prayer, and singing meanwhile its own song of praise: and at midnight when it was time

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 99.

[2] *Fioretti*, loc. cit. A somewhat similar incident is related in II Celano, 126

for Francis to rise for matins, the bird would flutter against his cell until he arose. And for that falcon Francis had a great love.[1]

Meanwhile upon Brother Leo, the faithful keeper of his master's retreat, there fell a tender awe and fear, knowing as he did the trouble through which Francis was passing and divining some great heavenly favour at hand. One night when he came to the bridge and called aloud "*Domine labia mea aperies*," no answer came, and for once the fear in his soul made him disregard the injunction to go back and not pass the bridge. Crossing over to the cell, he found it empty and went on to a wooded spot where he thought Francis might be. There indeed Francis was. In the moonlight Leo saw him kneeling in prayer with face and arms uplifted towards heaven, and heard him repeating with fervour: "Who art Thou, my most sweet God? Who am I, a most vile worm and Thy useless servant?" And Leo knew that he was a witness to some intimate colloquy between Francis and his Lord: but what the colloquy portended Leo could not understand. But looking on amazed, he saw a flame resting over the head of Francis who three times extended his hand towards it. And after awhile, which seemed to Leo a great age, the flame returned to heaven. Then in terror at his intrusion Leo began to move away as softly as he might. But Francis hearing his footsteps upon the leaves, called to him not to go away: whereat Leo was in such fear and shame that he wished the earth would open and swallow him. But chiefly he feared lest because of his disobedience Francis would relieve him of his attendance: and at that thought the heart of Leo became a great void.

[1] *Fioretti*, loc. cit.; I Celano, 168; *Tract. de Mirac.* 25; *Leg. Maj.* VIII. 10.

But Francis, divining his trouble and the love which had conquered his will to obey, rebuked him but gently and kept him by his side. Emboldened at such gracious tenderness, Leo asked Francis to explain the meaning of that Divine visitation, and then he learned that the words he heard were the protest of Francis' humility because our Lord Christ had asked of him so unworthy, three gifts. And the Lord had bidden him three times put his hand to his bosom: and each time Francis had found there a ball of gold, which he offered, at first not understanding the mystery; but Christ had told him that these balls of gold were the virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience which were in the heart of Francis.[1] Then when they had spoken of these things, Francis went with Leo to the oratory where Mass was said: there Francis cast himself upon the ground before the Altar and prayed that God would make known to him His will concerning the mystery which lay upon him. And when he had prayed he signed himself with the sign of the cross: then wistfully bade Leo take the book of the Gospels from the altar and read the first passage upon which his eye alighted.

The passage was one which relates how it behoved Christ to suffer. A second and third time Leo opened the book at Francis' bidding, and each time the reading concerned the passion of our Lord. Gently and with joy Francis submitted to what he believed was an indication of the Divine Will: by suffering he too must come into the Kingdom of God, even as it was with his Lord: and into his soul there came a great longing to share in the passion of Christ and to have in himself that divine love which impelled Christ to suffer for men.[2]

[1] *Fioretti*, loc. cit. III. Consid.

[2] *Fioretti*, loc. cit.; II Celano, 92, 93; *Leg. Maj.* XIII. 2.

MONTE ALVERNIA

With this prayer in his heart Francis awakened one morning about the feast of the Holy Cross—or as some say, on the very day of the Holy Cross.[1] One chronicler tells us that on the previous day whilst Francis was praying in his cell, an angel had appeared to him and had bidden him prepare himself to suffer patiently what God was about to work in him; and Francis had replied that he was willing to receive patiently whatever it would please his Lord to do unto him.[2] But whether the angel appeared to his bodily sense or made his presence felt by the inner understanding, is not said. Yet this we may well believe that to the soul of Francis there came some Divine intimation of that which was now to happen to him. Francis, then, was kneeling at his morning prayer on this day of days when he saw in vision a strange form coming towards him, whereat he was much terrified.[3] But as this strange thing came near and stood on a stone above him he saw one who was a man and yet a Seraph. His arms were extended and his feet conjoined, and his body was fastened to a cross. Two wings were raised above his head, two were extended as in flight and two covered the body.[4] But the face was beauteous beyond all earthly beauty; and yet it was the face of suffering. And at that Francis was filled with great joy because of the beauty of

[1] S. Bonaventure (*Leg. Maj.* XIII. 3) says: "*Quodam mane circa festum Exaltationis sanctæ crucis*". The Chron. XXIV. Gen. (*Anal. Franc.* III. p. 30): "*Circa festum Exaltationis sanctæ crucis vel ut in quodam revelatione divina, in eodem festo*". This revelation is evidently that mentioned in the *Instrumentum de Stigmatibus* compiled by Brother Philip, Provincial of Tuscany, by command of the Minister-General, in 1283. Vide *Anal Franc.* III. p. 374; and pp. 641 *seq.* The *Fioretti* says: "*Viene il dì seguente, cioè il dì della santissima Croce*". Celano gives no indication of the day.

[2] *Fioretti*, loc. cit.

[3] *Leg. Maj.* XIII. 3; Eccleston [ed. Little], col. xiii, p. 93.

[4] Compare the description of the Seraphim in Isaias VI. 2.

that face; and then with exceeding pity and sorrow because of the pain and suffering which was there.[1] Suddenly in a moment of great agony the Seraph smote him as it were in body and soul, so that Francis was in great fear; and yet again the Seraph spoke to him as a friend making clear many things which hitherto had been hidden from him: as he afterwards told his companions.[2] And then after a moment which seemed an age,[3] the vision disappeared.

When Francis came to himself, his first thought was one of perplexity as to what this vision could mean; for he knew that no heavenly spirit can suffer mortal pain. In this perplexity of mind he rose from his knees and stood pondering amazedly: whilst still in his soul was the mingled sorrow and joy of the vision. As he stood thus, the meaning was made clear: for in the body of Francis appeared the marks of the crucified Seraph: in his hands and feet were the scars of wounds and in the scars were the impressions of nails, so formed that they might be taken for the nails of the cross; the round heads black in appearance, protruding in the palms of the hands and on the insteps of the feet; whilst on the back of the hands and on the soles of feet were the bended points of the nails: and his right side was as though pierced by a lance.[4] The Seraph of the vision was the spirit of the Crucified

[1] I Celano, II, III. 94; Celano, *de Miraculis*, II. 4; *Leg. Maj.* loc. cit.; *Fioretti*, loc. cit.

[2] Cf. Eccleston [ed. Little], xiii, p. 93.

[3] *Fioretti*, loc. cit.: "*Disparendo dunque questa visione mirabile dopo grande spazio*".

[4] Celano, loc. cit.; *Leg. Maj.* loc. cit.; *Fioretti*, loc. cit. For description of the stigmata see also the letter of Brother Elias to Gregory of Naples written to announce the death of St. Francis (Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 90). See also the attestations of Gregory IX in his letters "*Non minus dolentes*" and "*Cum sæculi vanitate*" in Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 213 *seq.*

suffering through love, which now had taken entire possession of God's dear poor one;[1] of which possession the external marks were the sign and seal.

Now at this happening Francis was alone in his solitude: not even Leo being present;[2] and at first he thought never to reveal to any man this wonderful thing which had come to him: even as every true man will jealously hide the most precious gift to his heart, not speaking of it even to his friends. And then again he was in doubt for that it was impossible altogether to hide this manifest sign from those who were most with him; and because it was thus manifest, would he be setting himself against the Will of God and taking wholly to himself what God had meant perhaps for a sign and comfort to others? Thus he knew not whether he should speak or remain silent. But at length he called to him his companions and in general terms set this question to them, whether one should reveal or hide a favour which God had granted him.

[1] S. Bonaventure, *ut supra*, says it was Christ *sub specie Seraph* who appeared to Francis. Celano in *Legenda Prima* (loc. cit.) speaks rather vaguely; "*vidit in visione Dei virum unum quasi seraphim sex alas habentem*," but in the *Tractatus de Miraculis* he says more positively: "*vidit in visione Seraph in cruce positum*". It is curious to note the difference in treatment of the story of the stigmata between the earliest paintings and those of Giotto and his successors. In the former the saint is alone, standing up amid trees and flowers indicative of a wood; in the latter, the saint is generally depicted kneeling, with Brother Leo near at hand, and upon rocky ground. It is, however, to be noted that the marks of the stigmata, as Celano expressly says, appeared after the vision, when Francis had risen up and whilst he was pondering on the significance of what he had seen. Another difference is that in the earliest paintings the Seraph has the conventional face of a Seraph, whereas in the later paintings, it is the face of our Lord. It is the difference between Celano and S. Bonaventure. Cf. Matrod, *Deux Émaux Franciscains au Louvre*.

[2] Had Leo been present Celano would surely have adduced him as a witness to so wonderful an event. Moreover, S. Bonaventure (*Leg. Maj.* XIII. 4) implies that none of the saint's familiar companions (*socii familiares*) knew of what had happened.

Whereupon Illuminato saw that Francis spoke as one much amazed, and divined that something extraordinary had happened: so he replied: "Brother, thou knowest that not for thyself alone are the heavenly secrets revealed to thee, but for others also. Therefore is it to be feared that if thou dost hide what thou hast received for the profit of many, thou wilt be judged guilty of the hidden talent."[1] Then shyly and as by constraint Francis told the brothers of the vision and the stigmata; adding that the Seraph had told him many things of which he could not speak. Yet he kept hidden from their sight the marks in his body, covering his hands and feet with his tunic. Only to Leo did he willingly bare his wounds, when because of the pain and the bleeding he must needs have them bound with bandages.[2]

But to Rufino the contemplative, Francis spoke intimately of some of the things that had been revealed to him concerning the Order, in the moment of the vision; namely, that the life and profession of the Friars Minor should never fail even to the day of judgment; also that no one who maliciously persecuted the Order would have a long life; that no evil person wishing to live wickedly, could long remain in the Order; and that whosoever loved the Order from his heart, however great a sinner he might be, should at last find mercy.[3]

Now seeing how God had dealt with him, Francis' heart was filled with unutterable gratitude; and even the very ground became sacred and precious to him. And the remembrance of that smiting by the Seraph filled him always with renewed

[1] *Leg. Maj.* XIII. 4; *Fioretti*, loc. cit.

[2] *Fioretti*, loc. cit.; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 68.

[3] *Spec. Perf.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 79. Eccleston, loc. cit. Cf. *Fioretti*, III. Consid., where the promises are amplified and include this, that the brethren who observed the Rule perfectly, will at their death enter into eternal life without passing through purgatory.

wonder: so had the angel dealt with the patriarch Jacob of old, smiting him into submission to His will. Then Francis, because he was unable to perform the act himself on account of his wounds, bade Ruffino consecrate the stone upon which the Seraph had stood, even as Jacob had consecrated the stone of his vision, washing it and anointing it with oil:[1] and from that day that stone has been held sacred by all the generations of the brethren.[2]

But because his heart was full, he must needs utter in words what his soul felt, constrained by a poet's need: and yet because of the strangeness of this mystery and the fear which was still upon him, his tongue was held and he could speak but haltingly in borrowed words. So taking parchment and pen he wrote this psalm, which a later generation of men styled "The Praise of the Most High God": though as you will see, it had more fittingly been styled, "The Praise of the Crucified":—

> Thou art the Holy Lord God; Thou art God of gods, Who alone workest marvels.
>
> Thou art strong, Thou art great, Thou art most high; Thou art almighty, Thou holy Father, King of heaven and earth.
>
> Thou art threefold and one; Lord God of gods.
>
> Thou art good, every good, the highest good; the Lord God, living and true.
>
> Thou art love, charity; Thou art wisdom; Thou art humility.
>
> Thou art patience; Thou, fortitude and prudence.
>
> Thou art security, Thou art rest; Thou art joy and gladness.

[1] Eccleston, loc. cit. Later writers attribute this act to Leo (cf. *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 67) but Eccleston had the story from Peter of Tewkesbury who had it from the lips of Leo himself.

[2] It is encased in a grille in the Chapel of the Stigmata: and on it is this inscription: "*Hic sumasti Domine, servum tuum Franciscum*". Twice a day after matins and vespers the friars proceed to the chapel in solemn procession and venerate this sacred spot.

Thou art justice and temperance; Thou art all our wealth and plenty.
Thou art beauty, Thou art gentleness; Thou art the protector; Thou art the keeper and the defender.
Thou art our refuge and strength; Thou art our faith, hope, and charity.
Thou art our great sweetness; Thou art our eternal life.
Infinite Goodness, great and wonderful Lord God Almighty: loving and merciful Saviour.[1]

Thus in the strength of his joy, Francis sang his *Magnificat*.

It has often been said that those who are nearest to God, are nearest to the hearts of their fellow-men: and of this we have an instance in Francis in this day of his exaltation. For whilst he was being thus fashioned in the likeness of his Lord and enduring both the pain and the sweetness of the fashioning, Brother Leo, that faithful friend and servitor, was passing through a trial of his own, hard to endure. Out of his very familiarity with Francis had come his trial. He had witnessed the agony through which the master he worshipped, was passing to his glory; he had caught some glimpse of life of the elect. And then there had come upon him this doubt: how could he, so unworthy and so mean, stand beside this holy one of God or ever hope to attain to the eternal life? And Leo's heart was heavy almost to despair. At one moment he

[1] *Opuscula S. Franc.* (Quaracchi), p. 124; Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 66; *The Seraphic Keepsake*, by Reginald Balfour, p. 54. The original autograph is preserved in the sacristy of the Sagro Convento, Assisi. On one side of the sheet are written the Praises; on the other the Blessing of St. Francis given to Brother Leo (*vide infra*). Cf. Fr. Paschal Robinson, *Writings of St. Francis*, pp. 146-9.

Mr. Balfour (loc. cit. p. 52) has pointed out the inadequacy of the conventional title given to the Praises. He says: "This title is misleading, because in the 'Praise of God Most High,' Saint Francis does not dwell with any special emphasis upon that aspect of Almighty God, which humanity sums up in the word 'Creator . . . . Saint Francis addresses . . . in a word, the loving and merciful *Saviour*".

would determine to cast himself upon the pity of Francis; but again he drew back, fearing with inconsequent fear lest Francis should reject him; and then he were lost indeed. Then in his agony of soul he thought that if only Francis would write with his own hand some words of Holy Scripture which had come to Leo as a promise of day, and give him the writing, it would be to him a token of God's favour and something to hold to in his desolation. And yet even this he feared to ask: dreading the awful climax of a refusal. But in this hour of his own joy, when Francis was writing his Praises of the Crucified Saviour, there came to his receptive heart an understanding of the soul of Leo abiding mutely beside him. And when he had written those Praises, turning the parchment over, he inscribed these words of Holy Writ:—

> **The Lord bless thee and keep thee.**
> The Lord show His face to thee and have mercy upon thee.
> The Lord turn His countenance to thee and give thee peace.[1]

And beneath these words and to give them a personal application Francis wrote:—

> **Brother Leo may our Lord bless thee.**

And then not content till he had made this message complete, he drew beneath the blessing the rude figure of a head and upon this, yet so drawn as to pass through the letters of Leo's name, he drew the sign *Thau*.

Then Francis gave the parchment to the suffering Leo, saying: "Take this sheet and carefully keep it by thee till the day of thy death". And to his amazement Leo saw written there the very words he had desired to be written; and there too he saw himself marked with the sign of the elect. And

[1] Numbers vi. 24-6. The translation is according to the Vulgate, as was the Latin text inscribed by Francis.

at that moment the dread of despair vanished from his soul; nor did it ever return.[1]

Francis abode on Monte Alvernia until after St. Michael's feast.[2] On the day of his departure the lord Orlando came from his castle of Chiusi to bid him farewell; and an ass being brought, Francis was placed upon it; and with Brother Leo in attendance and a peasant, the owner of the ass, he began his journey back to the Porziuncola. But before starting Francis called to him his companions of these unforgettable days and bade them abide in charity and be constant in prayer and have a care of this holy mountain. Then whilst the brethren were weeping because of his parting and the tenderness of his words, Francis and Leo and the peasant took the road which goes by Monte Acuto and down the steep ways into Borgo San Sepolcro.

On the journey Francis became lost in prayer to all visible things, and even as they passed through Borgo San Sepolcro

[1] II Celano, II, xx. 49; *Leg. Maj.* xi. 9; *Fioretti*, loc. cit. II. Consid. The *Fioretti* puts the temptation of Brother Leo before the impressing of the stigmata; but Celano clearly states that the blessing was written at the same time as the Praises. Now we know from Leo's own testimony that the Praises were written "*after the vision and speech he had of the Seraph and the impression in his body of the stigmata of Christ*". So Leo tells us in the note he added to this very parchment which Francis gave him (*vide* note on preceding page).

The character of Leo's temptation which, as all the chroniclers say, was "of the spirit and not of the flesh"—"*non carnis sed spiritus*"—is illustrated by the words of the blessing and the sign *thau* upon the head. Leo's description: "*signum thau cum capite*" written on the same sheet is very meant of its prophetic interpretation. Cf. Ezechiel ix. 6; cf. R. Ball[illegible]r, loc. it. p. 66 *seq.* Mr. Montgomery Carmichael (*La Benedizione di S. Francesco*) argues that the sign manual represents a cross on Monte Alvernia: but this imaginative supposition is in contradiction to Leo's own description and to the known custom Francis had of signing his letters with the sign *tau*. Cf. Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* II. 3; cf. Edouard d'Alençon, *La Benediction de St. François*.

[2] *Leg. Maj.* xiii. 5.

he did not hear the acclamation of the townsmen nor heed the town itself.

In the evening they came to the hermitage of Monte Casale up in the mountains above the town, where Francis pityingly gave health and peace to an epileptic brother: and at Monte Casale he rested: for this place is fashioned for joy and contentment, so paradisal is its beauty. But after a few days he passed on to Città di Castello in the plain, where the people received him with delight and brought to him their sick to be cured. Here he remained many days at the prayer of the people; and when he again took up his journey the first snows were falling on the mountains over which he must pass on his way to the Porziuncola. That night they were storm-bound in the hills and could not proceed: and at this the owner of the ass on which Francis rode—not he who came from Alvernia, but another—murmured and was in sore temper because of the cold. But Francis took his hand and at the touch the cold seemed to vanish from the man's body and he passed the night without discomfort amidst the rocks.[1]

Next day they journeyed on and came to the Porziuncola: and to the eyes of Leo it seemed as they drew nigh this sacred place, that a bright cross preceded them, and on the cross was the figure of the Crucified: and it went before them until they entered the enclosure.[2]

Thus Francis came home, himself little heeding the voices of men: but all the countryside were telling the marvel which had happened to him: and in the soul of Leo there was a great joy.

[1] *Leg. Maj.* XIII. 7; *Fioretti*, loc. cit. IV. Consid.

[2] For this journey our chief authority is the *Fioretti*, loc. cit. All the country between Alvernia and Assisi, through which Francis passed, is full of local traditions handed down by the people through the centuries.

CHAPTER III.

TOWARDS EVENING.

It is a marvellous thing that on his return from Alvernia, Francis seemed to glow with new energy in spite of the fact that his body was now almost wholly broken with sickness and pain; for to the gastric troubles and consequent debility which had increased much since his journey to the East, there was now added the pain and weakness of the stigmata. A mere touch made his wounds throb with pain,[1] and there were frequent bleedings which robbed him of his poor physical strength.[2] Because of the wounds in his feet and the fleshy nails, he could not walk except with acute suffering.[3] And yet in spirit he was as one whose youth is renewed.

Incredible as it might seem, hardly had he returned to the Porziuncola than he set out on an evangelizing tour, riding on an ass.[4] The brethren pityingly besought him to rest and to have a care of his body and to submit himself to medical treatment; but he gaily brushed aside their anxieties; where would be his knightly honour, if bearing the marks of Christ's passion, he sought to avoid the pain? He had taken his Master's cup, and he must needs drink it

[1] II Celano, 138; Tract. de Miraculis, 4; *Leg. Maj.* XIII. 8.
[2] I Celano, 95; II Celano, 136. Tract. de Miraculis, 4.
[3] *ibid.* [4] I Celano, 98.

that he might fulfil in himself the sufferings of Christ which yet were lacking in him.

The truth is, Francis knew that his days on earth were drawing near their end, and he was like a bride solicitous only to prepare the home against the coming of him whom her soul worships. Why waste the time in useless cares? The brethren, too, knew that his days were numbered. They had but to look upon his weakened body: and then there was a mysterious warning which had come to Brother Elias one night when he and Francis were stopping at Foligno. In his dream Elias had seen a venerable priest clothed in white garments, who bade him arise and tell Francis that in two years' time he would go the way of all flesh at the call of the Lord.[1] When Francis heard the message, his soul bounded with joy and all his being turned eagerly to that call of the Lord: but the brethren in their love for him and in their self-pity, were made only the more anxious to tend him with all services, and, if it might be, to ward off the approaching day.

And shortly a new aggravation of illness forced him to submit somewhat to their solicitations. His malady brought on a trouble of the eyes, so that he could hardly endure the light; and he was altogether in great pain.[2] Then did Brother Elias become more importunate, bidding him as his guardian to take medical advice. But Elias did more: he sent word to Cardinal Ugolino, knowing well how Francis held him in great reverence.

It was now early summer; and the cardinal was with the papal court at Rieti.[3] At the court was a physician of great

[1] I Celano, 109; *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sab.], cap. 121. [2] Celano, 98.

[3] Honorius III had been compelled by a rising of the Romans to quit Rome at the end of April. After a short stay at Tivoli, he came with his court to Rieti and remained there until the end of 1226.

skill. The cardinal, therefore, sent an urgent message to Francis to come and be treated at Rieti. Francis submitted; and arrangements were made to carry him thither by easy stages.[1]

Now this journey was to be memorable both for what happened at its beginning and towards its end; but chiefly for what happened at the beginning.

On the first day Francis journeyed only as far as the convent of San Damiano, less than an hour's slow ride from the Porziuncola: for he much desired to visit Sister Clare both for his own soul's comfort and for hers. In these days of his peace when the hand of the Lord lay so mightily, yet so sweetly, upon him, he turned to Clare for understanding sympathy as to no one else. None other was there in all the earth who understood so well as she, this mystery which had come to him, and what his own thought and desire must be concerning it. For to her too in the walled garden of her heart, Christ had revealed Himself: and she knew, and knowing, worshipped. No word of hers would tarnish the bloom upon this "secret of the King". With her therefore Francis could speak as to none other. And because she knew him so well, her woman's pity for his sufferings never made her less a companion to him in his determination to suffer even to the uttermost what pain should be sent him, that so he might the more fully probe the love which made Christ his Lord suffer. Hence when others who understood him less though they loved him well, claimed the guardianship of his body, he turned once more to Clare for the comfort of his spirit.

It was to be but a passing visit and the next day would see the travellers again on the road. But that night Francis became much worse and it was soon evident that he could travel

[1] I Celano, 99; *Fioretti*, XVIII.

no further for the present. Then Clare, divining Francis' wish, had a hut built for him in the convent garden, a hut of wattles such as he had at the Porziuncola: and thither Francis was carried in the loving care of Angelo Tancredi, Ruffino, Leo and Masseo;[1] Clare's vigilant sympathy hovering over them all. For between all these first disciples of Poverty there was a spirit of comradeship in which few of the later generation could share: and doubtless Clare was thankful that in these days of pain Francis should be tended by the companions of those first joyous years.

The suffering grew intense and to the agony of nerve and limb was added the dread loss of sight.

To increase his discomfort the hut was over-run with mice. Now ordinarily Francis would not have minded this much, because of his love of all creatures, even the meanest. But in his blindness and pain their importunate intrusions set all his nerves ajar: and for once he felt a certain pity for himself and grew fearful lest his patience should fail. In this new need he turned to the Lord and besought Him to come to his aid. Hardly had he uttered the cry when to his spirit there came the responding question: "Tell me, brother, if anyone should give thee in return for thy infirmities and sufferings, a treasure so vast and precious that the whole earth by comparison would be as nothing to it, wouldst thou not greatly rejoice?" Francis answered musingly: "Great indeed, O Lord, would be this treasure and very precious and exceedingly wonderful and desirable". The voice replied, "Then, brother, be glad and make merry in thine infirmities and sufferings; and for the rest, thou mayest be assured of My Kingdom, even as if thou wert already there".

[1] I Celano, 102. Celano does not give their names, but his description of them leaves no doubt.

Now as when on a dreary journey suddenly one comes upon an entrancing scene of loveliness and forgets in a moment the dragging weariness and leaps with a new understanding and joy of life, so now it was with Francis. The dread veil of despondency lifted and he felt only the treasure of life which the earth held, scintillating with the mystic promise of the fuller life to come. And all his being throbbed with the pleasure of it and his heart was full of gratitude for the fair world which promised yet a fairer. And through the remaining hours of the night his whole being was eager with worship, and he could have kissed the earth and the sky for the promise they had brought him. So he passed the night.

But as soon as day broke Francis arose and called his companions, for he could not rest with his joy unshared. "My brothers," he exclaimed, "if the emperor promised his kingdom to one of his liege-men, should not that man be very glad? And if he gave him his whole empire, should he not yet even more rejoice? Surely then ought I to be glad of my infirmities and sufferings, and be comforted in our Lord and for ever give thanks to God the Father and to His only Son our Lord Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit, because of this so great favour He has done to me; for he has deigned to assure me, His unworthy servant whilst yet I live in the flesh, of the possession of His Kingdom. Wherefore to the praise of the Lord and for our own comfort and for the edification of our neighbour, I will make a new hymn concerning those creatures of the Lord which minister to our daily need and without whom we could not live."

So saying, Francis sat down and pondered: then lifting his voice he uttered in the Italian tongue this song: -

Most high omnipotent, good Lord,
Thine are praise, glory and honour and all benediction,
To Thee alone, Most High, do they belong:
And no man is there, worthy Thee to Name.
Praise be to Thee, my Lord, with all Thy creatures,
Chiefest of all, Sir Brother Sun
Who is our day, through whom Thou givest light:
Beautiful is he; radiant, with great splendour:
Of Thee, Most High, he is a true revealer.
Praise be to Thee my Lord, for Sister Moon and for the stars;
In heaven hast thou formed them, bright, precious and fair.
Praise be to Thee my Lord, for Brother Wind, and for the air and for the cloud, for clear sky and all weathers,
By which Thou givest nourishment to all Thy creatures.
Praise be to Thee my Lord, for Sister Water; she
Most useful is, and humble, precious and pure.
Praise be to Thee my Lord, for Brother Fire; by whom
Thou lightest up the night:
And fair is he and merry, mighty and strong.
Praise be to Thee, my Lord, for our Sister, Mother Earth,
The which sustains and keeps us:
She brings forth diverse fruits, the many-hued flowers and grass.
O Creatures all! praise and bless my Lord, and grateful be,
And serve Him with deep humility.

Having uttered his hymn, Francis caused it to be written down, entitling it "The Canticle of Brother Sun". And he set it to a melody, and straightway taught the brethren to sing it.[1]

Thus out of that night of pain did Francis issue forth the singer of a new song, one of those songs of the soul's awaken-

[1] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sab.], cap. 100, 118, and 119; II Celano, 213.
The Canticle of the Sun is given in *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 120; and in *Conformit.* lib. II. fruct. XI. ii. It also exists in many MSS. Cf. Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect., Étude Spéciale du Chap.* 120, pp. 277-91; Fr. Paschal Robinson, *The Writings of St. Francis*, pp. 159-3; Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. lxiii.

ing which the world treasures with material instinct: for they are the joyous cry of an attained life—attained within the soul of the singer—which the world's heart has long desired to see and the vision of which will never again be wholly lost. Therefore are they taken to the heart of the world as the break of day is taken to the heart of the patient earth; for they are light, and warmth, and colour, all that makes life free and glad.

The "Canticle of Brother Sun" is a song of the kinship of all God's creatures and of God's Fatherhood of them all, and of the liberty which the heart of man finds in the vision of this truth. That is the palpitating cry which breaks out in its halting cadence and rugged line. It is the glad announcement of life where men had seen but counterfeit or negation. Those who had sang of religion before him had bemoaned the tyranny of the sense-world and had seen freedom of soul only in the life beyond the grave: pathetically they bewailed their exile here on earth; joyous only when they could escape in faith and hope from the earth on which they were born. But to Francis, mother earth and the sky above and all the things which God has made were insistent pledges of the life eternal, tokens of the Divine Life which creates both present and future: and he knew no other way of immersing his own being in the Eternal Sea than by immersion in the sea of life around him; only this was he careful of, to keep his soul pure from selfish desire and to abide in the faith of Christ His Lord; believing that only so would the created world give up to him its secret.

And now with his faith in God so secure and all selfishness utterly banished in his union with his God, his heart and mind were free and all his being confessed with joyous clear confession his faith in the visible world. That was the

liberty into which Francis had come and which he sang in his song. How it sent a thrill through the heart of Christendom and was one of the beginnings of a new religious sense and of a new secular art, you may read elsewhere;[1] and also how it was one of the beginnings of that Italian speech which Dante Alighieri moulded into such perfect melody.[2] For in the uttering of this song Francis used neither the Latin of the clerk nor the language of trouvêre or troubadour, as in the songs he had hitherto sung, but with the instinct of the true poet he strung his verse to the melody of his own people's tongue. It was but an untutored speech, the speech of his people, unrecognized by the scholar save as a menial in the house. Yet could no other speech have borne the burden of his song: for no true poet yet has sung truly in an alien tongue or in any other save that of his own blood.

Was Clare present when Francis composed his hymn? Indeed it may well be that the world owes this song in part to her inspiring sympathy: for never had Francis been more truly himself than in these days at San Damiano. He had become again the joyous troubadour of the Lord, even as he had been in the days before his great trial: but just as the early beauty will sometimes reappear in the countenance of one who has gone through years of suffering, ennobled and spiritually transfigured; or as the golden dawn is fulfilled in the mellow brilliance of evening sunlight; so was it with Francis in this rejuvenation of his spirit. More and more ardent he grew to conquer the world by love and poetry, believ-

[1] Cf. E. Gebhart, *L'Italie Mystique*, pp. 282-3; *ibid.* pp. 83-4; Müntz, *Hist. de l'art pendant la Renaissance: Les Primitifs*: Thode, *St. François d'Assise et l'Art Italien.*

[2] Cf. Ozanam, *Les Poètes Franciscains*, p. 82; Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, p. 243; Monaci, *Crestomazia italiana dei primi secoli*, fasc. 1. pp. 29-31.

ing that if men could but be brought to gaze upon the beauty of God and His works, they would be impelled to love and serve Him. In his recovered freedom all the world was again transfigured in the mystic light of his glowing idealism.

An incident now happened which confirmed him in this glad outlook. Whilst he was still at San Damiano, a long-smouldering feud burst into flame between the municipality of Assisi and the bishop. The bishop excommunicated the magistrates, and these forbade the citizens to have any business relations with the bishop's court either for buying or selling. When the news reached the ears of Francis he sent for Brother Pacifico, the poet and singer, and for others of the brethren. One of them he bade go and summon the magistrates to the bishop's palace, and they out of reverence at once complied with the request. On their arrival they were met by Pacifico and his companions and by the bishop's court. Then, following out the injunction of Francis, the brethren sang the "Canticle of Brother Sun," as Francis had taught them; but with this additional stanza, composed for the occasion:—

> Praise be to Thee my Lord for those who pardon grant for love of Thee,
> And weakness bear and buffetings:
> Blessed are they who in peace abide,
> For by Thee Most High, they shall be crowned.

As the brethren sang, the bishop and the magistrates felt themselves strangely moved: into the misty, heated world of their petty rivalries and recriminations had come this song of Francis as a gentle believing spirit, and before it they grew ashamed and silent; and then they became humble and repentant; and finally as the song ended, their hearts leaped to better things and they wept in their humiliation. Without

argument or bargaining they held out to each other the hand of peace and parted in friendship.[1]

Francis was happy when the brethren returned and told what had happened. In his joy he planned to send Brother Pacifico and his fellow-singers on tour through the world. They were to go from place to place preaching and singing the praises of the Lord. First a brother, one who had the gift of words, was to preach and at the conclusion of the sermon the others were to sing this song of God's creatures: and when they had sung they were to say to the people: "We are God's jongleurs; and for that we have sung to you, we ask a reward: and our reward will be that you all abide in sincere penitence".[2]

It was six weeks or more before Francis could continue his journey to Rieti.[3] Perhaps in the heart of Clare there was a foreboding that this was to be his last visit to San Damiano. His going would leave a void in her daily life, for all these weeks she had ministered watchfully both for the comfort of his soul and the alleviation of his bodily suffering,[4] yet would she rejoice, understanding the joy which had come to him and that it would remain. In the intimacy of these days she had learned much that would stand her in good stead in the days to come when the defence of Francis' ideals was to be committed into her brave hands.

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 101. [2] *ibid.* cap. 100.

[3] There are various readings in the MSS. of the *Spec. Perfect.* regarding the length of Francis' stay. Some say 60 days; others 50. Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], p. 195 *seq.* The *Conformit.* says 40 days. One MS. published in *Miscellanea Franc.* VI. p. 47 *seq.* has "ultra spatium 4 dierum;" but as M. Sabatier has pointed out (*loc. cit.*) the expression is vague and unlikely. Probably it is a copyist's error for "*ultra spatium* 40 *dierum*".

[4] A pair of sandals which Clare made to relieve the pain of his stigmatized feet are still preserved at San Damiano.

So Francis went on his way broken in body but greatly uplifted in spirit. By slow stages they had him borne over the road he knew so well. At length they came to the wooded hills that lie out in the plain near to Rieti; and once again Francis was too ill to be carried further. So the brethren stopped at the church of San Fabiano where the priest offered the shelter of his house. And here happened that other incident which was to make this journey notable.

The priest was very poor: his chief source of income was a small vineyard which in the best years produced twelve measures of wine: and the vineyard adjoined the house. Now when it became known that Francis had arrived at the house of the priest of San Fabiano, all manner of people, cardinals and bishops and citizens, went out to do him reverence and for some days the priest's house was as a shrine of pilgrimage. But alas for the vineyard! With no consideration for the priest's poverty, the pilgrims helped themselves to his fat grapes, and in a few days the vines were bare of their best. In despair the priest bewailed his prospect of hungry days ahead and began to regret his hospitality.

Francis, made aware of the havoc caused by his presence, pitied the poor priest and asked that he would come to him. "Be not disturbed, signore," he exclaimed confidently when the priest came; "we cannot alter things now, but we can trust in the Lord to make good this loss which you have suffered on my account. Tell me how many measures of wine you get when the year is at its best". The priest replied that twelve measures was his best output. "Then be not sad," said Francis, "and utter no further words of complaint: if you get less than twenty measures this year I will make good that quantity." And indeed when a few weeks later the time

for pressing the grapes came, the priest to his joy got twenty measures of good wine.[1]

Francis' coming to Rieti was in fact a Palm-Sunday triumph. The rumour of the stigmata had preceded him: he was "the saint," whom all hastened to honour and revere. One man whose cattle had been struck by some disease, came to the brethren and besought them to give him the water in which Francis washed his hands and feet, and returning home he sprinkled the cattle with the water and they recovered.[2]

In the city Francis was lodged in the bishop's palace: and hither the sick were brought to him that he might heal them by his prayers and blessing. One of these was a canon, a worldly cleric crippled as the result of evil living. With piteous tears he clamoured to be signed with the sign of the cross. Francis acceded to his request but with this sharp rebuke: "You have lived according to the desires of the flesh and not according to the judgments of God: how then shall I sign you with the cross? But I sign you in the name of Christ: yet know that greater evils will befall you if you return to your vomit: for on account of the sin of ingratitude things worse than the first come upon a man." The canon was cured: but unhappily went back to his evil ways, and shortly was killed by a falling roof whilst rioting in the house of some friends.[3]

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 104; *Fioretti*, XVIII. A new church marked the scene of this miracle a few years later. It was consecrated by Gregory IX. It then became known by the title of S. Maria della Foresta. A house for the friars was built adjoining it. The house and church have of late years been temporarily closed owing, I was told, to lack of alms for their support.

[2] *Leg. Maj.* XIII. 6; Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 18.

[3] II Celano, 41; *Leg. Maj.* XI. 5.

Meanwhile Francis was suffering greatly. Yet amidst his bodily agonies he continued to find an absorbing sweetness in meditating upon the beauty of God in His creation. All the creation seemed to sing of the glory of its Creator to his pain-racked senses: and this is the more wonderful when we remember how pain is apt to turn all sensible comfort into bitterness. One day, when he was suffering more than usual in eyes and head, he had a great desire to hear the viol. One of the brothers attending him, had been a violist in the world. Francis called for him and said: "Brother, the children of the world do not understand divine sacraments: and musical instruments which in former times were set apart for the praise of God, man's wantonness has converted to the mere delight of the ear. Now I would have you go secretly and borrow a viol and bring comfort with some honest melody to brother Body who is so full of pains". But the brother had not Francis' unworldliness. He protested that people might think he was given to levity if he asked for such a thing. "In that case," replied Francis, "let it be. It is better to put aside good things than to give scandal." Yet were his thoughts that day full of the mystery of music. The next night as he was lying awake thinking of God, suddenly there came to him the sound as of a viol being played; and as the bow touched the strings, such surpassing melody came forth, as no earthly viol could produce: so that Francis forgot all his pain. The morning following he said to the brother: "Brother, our Lord who consoles the afflicted never leaves me without consolation. I could not hear the viol of men; but I have heard one far sweeter." And he told his experience of the night.[1]

Probably to escape the noise of the world Francis had

[1] II Celano, 126; *Leg. Maj.* v. 11.

himself removed from the city to the hermitage of Monte Rainerio. Here he underwent the treatment which the physician prescribed. To relieve the agony of one of his eyes, it was thought well to cauterise his upper cheek. When the physician suggested this, Francis replied that he was willing to submit to whatever Brother Elias his superior should determine, for in the matter of his body he had no will of his own but was altogether in their hands.

So the iron for the cautery was got ready. For a moment Francis feared lest in the application he might shrink from the pain: but bracing his spirit to the ordeal he looked steadily at the iron in the fire: "O my brother fire!" he exclaimed, "amongst all creatures most noble and useful, be courteous to me in this hour, for I have ever loved thee and ever will love thee for love of Him Who created thee". The attendant brethren, less brave, left the room: but Francis making the sign of the cross over the burning iron, submitted without a tremor. When the operation was over the brethren came back. "O weak-spirited and of little faith, why did you flee?" Francis said to them; "in truth I tell you I felt not any pain nor sense of heat, so that if it is not well burned, he may burn me better".

But little relief came from this cauterising. Another time afterwards they opened the veins above the ear: but equally without giving relief. Another physician was called into consultation. He cauterised both ears, piercing them with the burning iron: and yet no relief came.[1] The serene endurance with which Francis underwent all these operations was a marvel to those who attended him. One of the physicians told the brethren, he would have applied such drastic remedies

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 115; Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 14.

with fear even to the strongest man: yet this man so weak and ill, bore all without a sign of grief.[1]

The secret of his endurance was, in truth, that indomitable joy which had come to him with the renewal of his spirit on Alvernia and at San Damiano. He was living in that joy and not in his bodily troubles. Frequently would he break into song, sometimes composing new canticles and setting them to music: in these moments of inspiration he was once again back in the wattle hut at San Damiano where his soul had found its new utterance: and because of the remembrance, he sent these canticles to Clare, knowing how she would rejoice in them and how well she understoood.[2]

He was eager too for new adventures for the love of his Lord Christ. In the knowledge and vision which had come to him it seemed as though he were but at the beginning of life. "My brothers," he would say, "let us begin to serve the Lord God, for hitherto we have done nothing or hardly anything." With a sort of caress his desire went back to the aspirations of his early days. At times he wished to return to the service of the lepers. At other times, however, he thought to retire to some far-off hermitage, where the world would not trouble him, and give himself wholly to prayer: this was when some echo of his troubles cast a shadow over his joy.[3] Yet again the surgent missionary instinct would be strong in him and he longed to go forth and proclaim God's love, and urge men to praise and worship Him. Unable to do this and yet unwilling to be a silent and useless herald of his Lord, he would dictate messages of faith to be sent abroad to stir up men to love God. Of such sort is the letter addressed to the governors and magistrates of the people in

[1] Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 14; *Leg. Maj.* v. 9.

[2] *Spec. Perfect* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 90. [3] Celano, 103; *Leg. Maj.* xiv. 1.

all parts of the world, in which he begged of them to see that due reverence be paid to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar and that the people be warned by a crier or by other means every evening to give praise and thanks to God. Another letter he caused to be written to the custodes of the Friars Minor, urging them to announce and preach the praises of the Lord and to exhort the people to respond to the call of the bells and worship God.[1]

So the winter wore on. The physicians' remedies brought but temporary reliefs: they could not arrest the disease. Cardinal Ugolino therefore advised that Francis be taken to Siena where the physicians were of good repute in their profession.[2] So in the first spring days they set out for the Tuscan city: and amongst the attendants was a physician who was under a vow to enter the Order.[3]

The journey was lightened by an incident which belongs to the romance of Francis' story. They had reached Tuscany and were passing through the undulating country between Campilia and San Querico, when three poor women met them in the road; three sisters they might have been so similar were they in feature and dress. Seeing Francis, they bowed and saluted him with this novel salutation: "Welcome, Sir Poverty!"[4]: then passed on. A chivalrous delight

[1] *Opuscula S.P.F.* (Quaracchi), Epist. IV. and V. pp. 111 and 113. Cf. p 192 Fr. Paschal Robinson, *The Writings of St. Francis*, pp. 125 and 127. Boehmer (*Analekten*, p. 70) classes the letter to the governors amongst the "doubtful" writings; but internal evidence is all in its favour.

[2] I Celano, 105.

[3] "Medicum quendam Ordini obligatum," II Celano, 93.

[4] "*Bene veniat, Domina Paupertas.*" As Mr. Montgomery Carmichael suggests, *Domina* in this instance is adjectival to *Paupertas*, and consequently is governed as to gender by the noun with which it is associated. As addressed to a man the words therefore should be rendered *Sir Poverty* or

thrilled the heart of Francis at this unexpected greeting, and for awhile he was wholly entranced in the thought. Then he remembered how poor the three women seemed to be, and he begged the physician to go back and give them each an alms: and this the physician did, giving to each a piece of money. But when on rejoining the company, the physician and brethren looked back, the women were nowhere to be seen. In after days the story went that these three women were the three evangelical virtues, poverty, chastity and obedience: and they who told the story thought it not strange that this witness should have been given to the singular holiness of Francis.[1] But to Francis they were but the messengers of heaven bearing witness to his mystic alliance with the Lady Poverty.

Of his sojourn at Siena this only need be said, that the citizens received him with a reverent tenderness: they were anxious to look upon him and hear his voice. One sent him a live pheasant, knowing how he loved the birds;[2] another, a Dominican friar, learned in theology, came to him propounding a thesis;[3] a Friar Minor, a stranger from Brescia, by stratagem got sight of the stigmata.[4] But not all the skill of

Lord Poverty) and not *Lady Poverty* as translators usually render them. Cf. Celano's *Legenda Secunda in Art* in *Franciscan Annals*, July, 1911, p. 217.

[1] II Celano, 93; *Leg. Maj.* VII. 6. Celano notes the fact of the disappearance, but merely adds: "*Plurimum stupefacti mirabilibus* [*Dei*] *erentum adnumerant, mulieres non fuisse scientes, quæ avibus eius transvolassent*". But St. Bonaventure, less cautious, unhesitatingly adopts the construction put upon the occurrence by the saint's physician and attendants. Yet he only cites the saint's companions (not the saint himself) as seeing in the occurrence "a something mysterious". It is he who adds the detailed explanation of the three evangelical virtues.

[2] II Celano, 170; *Tract. de Mirac.* 26.

[3] II Celano, 103. [4] *ibid.*, 137.

the physicians was of any avail: Francis grew weaker and it was seen that his end was fast approaching.

One night he had a violent hemorrhage, and the attendant brethren thought he must surely die. In their distress they gathered around him, weeping and crying out: "Father, what shall we do without thee? To whom wilt thou leave us orphans? Always hast thou been to us father and mother, begetting and bringing us forth in Christ. Thou hast been our captain and shepherd, our teacher and corrector, teaching and correcting more by example than by word. Whither therefore shall we go, sheep without a shepherd? orphaned sons without a father, men rude and simple without a captain?" Thus did they make lament, unable to restrain their grief. Finally they begged him at least to leave his blessing to all his sons and some written testament of his will that in after times the brethren might be able to say: "These words did our Father leave to us his brethren and sons, at his death".

At that Francis bade them call Brother Benedict of Pirato, a holy priest who had said Mass for him during his sickness. And when Brother Benedict came, Francis said to him: "Write how that I do bless all my brethren who are now in our religion or who shall ever come into it even to the end of the world. And since on account of my weakness and the pain of my infirmity I am not able to speak much, in these three words I briefly lay open my will and intention to all the brethren present and to come: namely that in token of my memory and blessing and last will, they love one another as I have loved them; that they forever love and observe our Lady Poverty; and that they always be loyal and subject to the prelates and clergy of Holy Mother Church."[1]

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 87.

Meanwhile word had been sent to Brother Elias, who came hurrying to Siena, to take Francis back to Assisi: for he knew that Francis wished to die where he had found his vocation, and too that the people of Assisi would never forgive him if he allowed the saint to die elsewhere. Moreover, it is not unlikely that Elias was already dreaming of the great shrine he would build to receive the body of the saint.

LE CELLE
(Near Cortona)

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST JOURNEY.

THE return-journey from Siena was accomplished not without difficulty. At the Celle, the hermitage in the ravine outside Cortona, they had to rest several days.[1] Whilst they were there a poor man came to the hermitage bewailing his lot, for his wife was dead and he had a family to support but no means. At once Francis gave him the new cloak which the brethren had but just procured to replace another which he had given away to a beggar on the road. With shrewd humour he bade the man on no account to give it up to anyone unless he were first well rewarded. At that moment the brethren came hastily on the scene, claiming the cloak. But a look from Francis steeled the man's heart and he clung to his gift till the brethren gave him compensation.[2]

Leaving the Celle, Elias avoided the direct road which leads to Assisi by Perugia; for he knew that the Perugians would not scruple to seize a dying saint, in order to add his relics to the treasures of the city. He therefore turned aside through the mountains, taking the long road round by Gubbio and Nocera; and for greater security he sent word to Assisi that a guard be sent to meet them beyond the mountains. So at Bagnara above Nocera an armed escort

[1] I Celano, 105.

[2] II Celano, 87, 88. Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 35.

awaited them. As they moved forward they came to the village of Satriano in the hills. Here the soldiers, hungry from long fasting and the journey, sought to buy food; but the villagers, probably resenting an overbearing importunity, refused to sell. In their predicament the soldiers came back to Francis and said laughingly: "It is needful that you share with us your alms, else must we go foodless". Francis retorted: "And right is it you can find nothing since you put your trust in your flies instead of God". By flies he meant their coins. Then he bade them go back to the villagers and beg food humbly for the love of God. The villagers thus appealed to, gave of what they had.[1]

As the party approached Assisi they were met by the citizens who had come out as for a festival. With loud cries they welcomed the saint, and strange as it might seem to men of this day, their joy was the greater because they knew he could not live long. He was in truth no longer the man, but the saint, in the eyes of these mediaeval folk: they were anxious to give him the honours of sainthood and already anticipated the glory of enshrining his body and invoking his aid from heaven.[2] So careful were they that this sacred treasure should not be again exposed to loss, they would not allow him to be taken out to the Porziuncola in the exposed plain, but had him lodged in the bishop's palace in the city. And Francis had to submit. He understood his people and he had no fear now of their adulation. Spontaneously and simply he referred the world's praise of himself to the sweet Saviour, so utterly did he see himself as the servant whom the King had deigned to honour: which indeed is the supreme humility of a perfect love. So when one day a brother in the freedom

[1] Celano, 77; *Leg. Maj.* VII. 10.

[2] I Celano, 105; *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 22.

of familiar converse, laughingly asked him for how much he would sell his sackcloths to the Lord, seeing that silken coverlets would later on cover his body; Francis cheerfully replied: "you speak the truth; it shall be so for the praise and blessing of my God".[1]

And now as he lay on his sick bed, his thoughts went out frequently to the brotherhood he had founded: and perhaps with the greater tenderness because of the thoughtful attentions the brethren were showering upon him in their anxiety.[2] Sometimes, too, brethren would come to him seeking advice and direction in the difficulties which they foresaw would arise after his death. Francis replied to them with a simple directness, not always without a troublous emotion as he brought his soaring ideals to judgment upon the things that were. One day a brother—a man of singular piety and wholly devoted to the Order, says the chronicle—asked Francis: "Father, you will pass hence, but the family which has followed thee, will be left behind in this vale of tears. Suggest, if thou canst, one in whom thy spirit rests, upon whom the Ministership-General may safely be laid." Francis feelingly made answer: "My son, I see none fitted to be the leader of this great army, the shepherd of this vast flock. But I will try to describe, and as the saying is, fashion with my hand, one in whom may be clearly seen what sort of man should be the father of this family.

"He should be a man of the highest character, of great discretion and of praiseworthy reputation; a man without private attachments, lest the greater love he shows to some should scandalize the whole body; a man to whom the study of prayer is his friend, who will give certain hours to prayer and certain hours to the flock committed to his care. For

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 109. [2] e.g. *ibid.* cap. 111.

at dawn of day he should be present at the celebration of Mass and in prolonged devotion commend himself and his flock to the Divine protection. But after prayer let him stand in public to be heckled by all, to reply to all and with gentleness to make provision for all. He should be a man who will create no foul clique by accepting persons; one who will care no less for the lowly and simple than for the learned and great. A man, to whom it may be allowed to excel in the gift of learning, but who nevertheless in his conduct will bear the image of pious simplicity and foster virtue. A man who will abhor money, the chief cause of corruption to our profession and perfection; who being the head of a poor Order and setting himself before the others as their example, will never wrongfully make use of money-chests. Nought else should he have save a habit and little book on his own account, and on account of the brethren a box of pens and a seal. Let him not be a collector of books nor given to overmuch reading, lest he take away from his office what he gives to study: a man, who, since he is the last resource of those who are in trouble, will console the afflicted so that the disease of despair may not overcome the sick through his lack of means to renew them in health That he may bend the froward to meekness, let him abase himself and waive somewhat of his right in order to gain a soul for Christ. Let him not shut up the bowels of tenderness towards those who have fled from the Order as if they were sheep who have perished, knowing how overpowering must be the temptations which can urge a man to so great a fall.

"I would have him honoured by all as one holding the place of Christ, and provided for in all things necessary with all goodwill. But it behoves him not to take pleasure in honours nor to delight in favours more than in injuries. If

through weakness or weariness he needs more palatable food, let him not take it in private but in public that other invalids may be relieved of shame in providing for their bodies. To him chiefly it belongs to discover the secret conscience and to draw forth the truth from the hidden springs and not to lend ear to tattlers. Finally such a man should he be, who will on no account blemish the manly beauty of justice out of a desire to hold on to dignity; a man who feels so great an office to be more of a burden than a dignity. Nevertheless let not apathy be brought about through excessive gentleness, nor discipline be dissolved through mistaken indulgence; for whilst he is an object of love to all, he shall be no less an object of terror to them who do evil. I would also that he have associates endowed with goodness, who even as he, will set an example of all good things; men stern against the world's pleasures, strong in the face of hardships; yet becomingly genial, that they may receive all who come to them with a holy cheerfulness. Behold the General of the Order, such as he should be." [1]

To these days of bedridden sickness we owe indeed many of the sayings of Francis that have come down to us; for some of the brethren, anxiously looking to the time when he would be no longer with them, were diligent in writing down his words.[2]

As the Pentecost Chapter drew near at which ministers and brethren from all the provinces of Italy were to be present, Francis longed once again to be amongst them. That being impossible he dictated a letter to be read at the Chapter.[3]

[1] II Celano, 184-6; *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier] cap. 80.

[2] Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 87.

[3] *Opuscula S.P.F.* (Quaracchi), *Epist.* II. p. 98 and p. 185; Fr. Paschal Robinson, *The Writings of St. Francis*, p. 109; Ubertino da Casale (*Arbor*

It was for the most part a passionate plea that the brethren should "show all the reverence and all the honour they possibly can to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom the things that are in heaven and the things that are on earth, are brought into peace with and reconciled to Almighty God," and he begged the priests "being pure, to offer the sacrifice purely, with a holy and clean intention, not for any earthly interest, neither from fear nor love of man," but with a will directed to God.

"Call to mind, my brothers, priests," he wrote, "what is written in the law of Moses: how those transgressing even materially died by the decree of the Lord without any mercy.[1] How much more and worse punishments does he deserve to suffer who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath esteemed the Blood of the testament unclean by which he was sanctified and hath offered an affront to grace.[2] For man despises, soils, and treads under foot the Lamb of God when, as the Apostle says, not discerning and distinguishing the holy bread of Christ from other nourishments or works, he either eats unworthily or, if he be worthy, he eats in vain and unbecomingly; since the Lord has said by the prophet: 'Cursed be the man that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully'.[3] And He condemns the priests who will not take this to heart saying: 'I will curse your blessings'.[4] Hear ye, my brothers: if the Blessed Virgin Mary is so honoured, as is meet, because she bore Him in her most holy womb; if the Blessed Baptist trembled and did not dare to touch the holy forehead of God; if the sepulchre in

Vitæ, V, cap. VII.) tells us this letter was written "*in fine dierum suorum*."—"*at the end of his days.*"

[1] A reference to 1 Cor. II. 27.
[2] Hebrews X. 29.
[3] Cf. Jeremias XLVIII. 10.
[4] Malachi II. 2.

which He lay for some time, is venerated; how holy, just and worthy ought he to be who touches with his hands, who receives with his heart and his mouth, and proffers to be received by others, Him Who is now no more to die but to triumph in a glorified eternity; on Whom the angels desire to look.[1] Consider your dignity, brothers, priests, and be ye holy because He Himself is holy.[2] And as the Lord God has honoured you above all, through this mystery, even so do you also love and reverence and honour Him above all."

In these and many more words did he plead with them once again for that which he had so yearningly pleaded for, ever since the far-off days which ushered in his conversion when he had been struck with shame at the neglect of the churches and the lack of reverence for the sacrament of the altar.[3]

[1] Cf. 1 Peter i. 12. [2] Cf. Leviticus xi. 44.

[3] There is one passage in this letter ordering that "one mass only" be celebrated each day in the places of the brethren, even if there be many priests in the community. Melanchthon used this passage as an argument against private masses in his Apology. Cf. Opuscula, l.c. p. 104; Fr. Paschal Robinson, p. 115. It may be taken for granted that St. Francis had no intention of condemning a practice favoured by the Church, for he was too Catholic in his obedience: but this mere statement of a self-evident principle hardly solves the question raised. The simple answer, however, seems to be that Francis was legislating for a particular purpose and against an actual evil. He wished the brethren to celebrate "not for any earthly interest" (*vide* Opuscula, l.c. p. 101), but as concentrating their being upon the fulfilment of the divine Will. The frequent legislation of the Church concerning offerings for masses, indicates the danger against which Francis wished to guard the brethren. Better have one mass said with an entirely spiritual intention, than many masses with an intention less spiritual. In a word, it was a regulation meant to guard and foster reverence for the Blessed Sacrament: just as in certain cases a priest might advise less frequent reception of the sacraments, with no intention of condemning as a general principle the more frequent reception. Idealist as he was, Francis

One other document Francis wrote about this time, namely his Last Will and Testament, and in that too we shall find the same anxious thought and the same passionate prayer.[1]

Meanwhile, despite the buoyant energy of his spirit, his bodily strength was rapidly failing. A physician of Arezzo named Buongiovanni, with whom Francis was on terms of friendship, now came to visit him. "Tell me, Bembemgnate," said Francis (addressing him familiarly), "tell me what you think of this dropsy of mine." Buongiovanni answered warily: "All will go well with you by God's grace". "Tell me the truth," retorted Francis, "and do not be afraid, for by God's grace I am no craven that I should fear death: by the grace of the Holy Spirit that worketh in me, I am so made one with my Lord that I am equally content to live or die." Then the physician said plainly: "According to our medical science your sickness is incurable and I believe that you will die at the end of September or by the fourth of the nones of October". At that Francis lay back in his bed and stretched out his hands to heaven: "Welcome, Sister Death!" he exclaimed; and in his face was a great happiness.[2]

But some little while after the physician had gone, Francis fell into such unwonted pain that even his exalted spirit could hardly maintain its cheerfulness. Then one of the brothers—his name is not recorded, but blessed should it be

was no theorician: he always spoke and acted in reference to particular actualities. Hence there is a peculiar danger in reading absolute principles into his actions or sayings: one may so easily render absolute, what in his mind was merely relative to a particular contingency.

[1] See also *Verba Admonitionis*, I. (*Opuscula* [Quaracchi], p. 1; Fr. Paschal Robinson, loc. cit. p. 5); and the exhortation *De reverentia corporis Domini* (*Opuscula*, loc. cit. p. 22; Fr. Paschal Robinson, loc. cit. p. 22).

[2] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 122.

for that in this extremity he was a true disciple of his master —came and stood by him, speaking the right words of comfort: "Father," he said, "thy life and conversation was and is a light and mirror not only to thy brethren but to the whole Church; and the same will be thy death; and although to thy brethren and many others, thy death will be a matter of sadness and sorrow, to thyself it will be a consolation and measureless joy; thou wilt pass from sore labour into exceeding rest, from many temptations and griefs into eternal peace, from the earthly poverty which thou hast loved and perfectly observed, to true and infinite riches and from this temporal death itself to the endless life where thou shalt see face to face thy Lord God whom in this world thou hast loved with so great a fervour of love and desire". Then after a while he went on: "Father, know of a truth that unless the Lord send thee healing from heaven, thy sickness is incurable and thou hast but a short time to live, as the physicians have said. But this I have said for the comforting of thy spirit that thou mayest rejoice both in body and mind so that when thy brethren and others shall visit thee they may find thee always rejoicing in the Lord, and after thy death both to those who see this thing and those who hear of it, thy death may be a perpetual memorial, as was and always will be thy life and doings."

At this Francis revived in spirit and again the gladness came into his voice as he replied: "If it be so that it please my Lord that I die shortly, then call to me Brother Angelo and Brother Leo that they may sing to me of Sister Death". They came, full sad and sorrowing, and as Francis desired they sang to him the "Canticle of Brother Sun," weeping as they sang. But when they came to the last verse, Francis, now again all fervour of joy, added yet another verse :- -

Praise be to thee, my Lord, for our sister, Bodily Death.
From whom no living man can flee;
Woe is to them who die in mortal sin.
But blessed they who shall find themselves in Thy most holy will.
To them the second death shall do no ill.

Outside the palace the soldiers who had been set by the city magistrates to guard the place and prevent Francis being taken away by stealth, heard the singing and spoke of it, as men will speak eagerly of the unwonted to their friends. For it is not the way of men to die singing: at least it is not how men expect a saint to die. And now the singing came frequently to their ears as they kept their watch, not only in the day but even in the night. The talk of the people at last reached the ears of Brother Elias, and he was disturbed in mind lest Francis' reputation for sanctity should be lessened. He came therefore to Francis and expostulated: "My dearest Father, truly glad am I both for thy own sake and that of thy companions at the joy thou showest in thy sickness. But the men of this city think thee a saint and believing that thou must shortly die, they ask, when they hear these praises being sung by day and night: How is it he thus openly rejoices, he who is about to die and should be thinking of his death?" But Francis replied straightly: "Do you remember how at Foligno you had a vision and told me someone had said to you that I should not live beyond two years? Before that by God's grace I frequently pondered by day and night upon my end; but from the hour of that vision I have been the more careful to think daily of the day of my death. Leave me, brother, to rejoice in the Lord and in His praises and in my infirmities, for by the grace of the Holy Spirit working in me, I am so united and wedded to my Lord that by His mercy I can well be merry in the Most High".

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier] cap. 121.

Yet at this time his suffering was very great, and all strength seemed to have left his body so that he was unable to move himself and depended entirely on those who tended him. A brother pityingly asked him which he would rather have, this drawn-out daily suffering or the cruel death of a martyr? Francis replied: "Son, that to me has been and is dearest and most acceptable, which it pleases my God to let happen to me; yet in regard to the distress of my suffering, this sickness, were it but to last three days, is more grievous than any martyrdom". And indeed every member of his body was in pain.[1]

But one day it seemed as though he were on the very point of death. In alarm the brethren gathered around him and besought him to bless them before he died: they were Elias and some others whom Francis had especially desired to come to him. As they pressed near, Francis extended his hands in blessing. Being blind, he was unable to see them.

Then happened a characteristic incident. Elias was on Francis' left, whether by accident or design we know not. The days which had passed since first Elias had been appointed Vicar-General, had revealed to himself and to the dying leader, the gulf of the spirit which separated them: yet Elias loved Francis in his own way and in this hour craved his blessing. Francis divined what was passing in the soul of his masterful lieutenant: pitiful and generous, he would not deny him this pledge of fellowship; praying it might be fellowship indeed. Crossing his arms, he asked upon whose head his hand rested. They told him: "upon the head of Brother Elias". "That is as I wish," replied Francis; and thereupon he invoked this blessing upon him: "My son I bless thee in all things, and through all things, and as the Most High has

[1] I Celano, 107.

multiplied my brothers and sons in thy hands, so upon thee and in thee do I bless them all. May God the King of all, bless thee in heaven and on earth. I bless thee as far as I can and more than I can; and what I cannot do, may He do in thee, He Who can do all things."

With his right hand still on the head of Elias, he continued: "Farewell in the fear of God, all ye my sons, and abide in Him always; for exceeding temptation is about to come to you and tribulation draws nigh. Happy shall they be who persevere in those things which they have begun, for the scandals that are to be, shall cause some to part therefrom. But I am hastening to the Lord and I trust to go now to my God Whom with devotion I have served in my spirit."[1] Sadly through the blessing wailed the insistent prophetic fear!

Shortly after this Elias obtained the consent of the city to remove the dying saint to the Porziuncola, for Francis had a certain longing of heart to die there in the bridal home of the Lady Poverty: and because of his urgency they dared not refuse.[2] So, late in the summer,[3] Francis made the last stage of his last home-coming journey.

Out by the gate of the city, called Portaccia,[4] they carried him lying on a bed, and descending the hill they reached the

[1] I Celano, 108.

[2] M. Sabatier suggests (*Spec. Perfect.* p. 243, note 1) that Elias had Francis removed to the Porziuncola to avoid the disedification he feared from Francis' joyous singing. Possibly this had some weight with Elias; but surely one cannot know Francis without recognising his indomitable will in matters of moment to his own vocation. It was only by constraint that at any time he would lodge in palaces. One can hardly think of him consenting to die in one.

[3] I Celano, 109, tells us that Francis was only a few days at the Porziuncola before his death: "*paucis quievisset diebus*".

[4] The Portaccia is now walled up. It is between the Porta di Mojano and the Porta S. Pietro.

high road.[1] How well Francis knew it! That road was bound to his heart by countless associations with the doings and aspirations of all these past years since his conversion: and as he was carried along now, these associations came to his memory in a long swift procession; and his heart swelled with emotion, as he lived again in quick remembrance of those past days: and over his soul there swept a yearning solicitude for the fraternity of his love mingled with keen gratitude to this city of its birth.

They had come about half the journey and had reached the hospital of the Crucigeri[2] whence there is a clear view of the city. There Francis bade the bearers stand and put the bed on the ground and turn his face to the city. It was as though he would gaze upon the city for the last time; but he was blind. Yet with his face turned towards it, he raised himself upon the bed, and in the hearing of those who stood by, prayed thus reminiscently and with supplication: "Lord, whereas of olden time this city was, as I believe, a place and dwelling of wicked men, now do I see that because of Thine abundant mercy in the time that it pleased Thee, Thou hast marvellously shown forth in her the multitude of Thy mercies and because of Thine own goodness hast taken her to Thyself to be the place and dwelling of those who should acknowledge Thee in truth and give glory to Thy Holy Name and make manifest to all Christian people the sweet odour of good fame, of holy life, of the truest Gospel teaching and perfection. I beseech Thee, therefore, O Lord Jesus Christ, Father of mercies, that Thou consider not our ingratitude but be mindful always of Thine own most abundant tenderness which

[1] The old Perugia-Foligno road ran nearer to the city than does the new road; it went by San Damiano. To-day it is but an unkempt path.

[2] On the site where the Casa Gualdi now stands.

Thou hast shown forth in her, that she may be ever the place and dwelling of them who acknowledge Thee truly and glorify Thy blessed and most glorious name for ever and ever. Amen."[1] Then again the solemn procession passed on.

So Francis was brought back to the Porziuncola to die.

[1] *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 124—The traditional blessing, inscribed over the Porta Nuova in Assisi, reads: "*Benedicta tu a Domino, Sancta Civitas Deo fidelis, quia per te animæ multæ salvabuntur et in te multi servi Altissimi habitabunt et de te multi eligentur ad regnum æternum.*"—Cf. *Fioretti. Delle sacre sante stimate*, IV. Consid.; Wadding, *Annales*, ad an. 1226.

But the text of the *Speculum Perfect.*, apart from other considerations, is more in the spirit of Francis. It is a prayer for the fraternity as well as for the city. Moreover the transition from the form of supplication to that of prophecy, leads one to suspect the shorter version. It is just the sort of change one finds in later versions.

CHAPTER V.

TESTAMENT AND DEATH.

The evening light had fallen upon the life of Francis when he came back for the last time to his beloved chapel in the wood: upon his spirit there was the mystic peace of the day's labour finished.

But if the lowlands were in shadow, the hilltops were aglow, those beacons of his chosen life towards which Francis had, through the long years, turned with persistent desire. Peacefully triumphant they stood out now amid the falling darkness, still holding the light of the day that was passing and pledging the fair day to come. Shortly now would his earth's day be closed: it had held its troubles and sorrows, its difficulties and temptations; but these he remembered only as favours of his Lord's love Who had called him in the way of the Cross. But mostly it had been a day of joy, and as a day of joy Francis looked back upon it in the evening light. For the earth had given to him his Lady Poverty and the fraternity; he had walked its ways as a herald of the Lord and in his adventurous wandering had found the knowledge and hope of his soul's desire. Truly had earth's life been to him the preparation-phase of the great High Mass of the Christian life, with humble confession of sin and glorifying of God, with scriptural lesson and Gospel promise. Now as he was about to pass to the very offering of the mystic sacrifice, with a backward look of deepest gratitude and a stretching forth to the mystery before him, he gathered his soul together and in measured tones of unwavering conviction said

his *Credo*. This was the Testament which Francis dictated in these last days at the Porziuncola,[1] to be a memorial to his brethren to the end of time. It was a confession of his faith in the vocation to which he and the brethren had been called. "This is the way in which the Lord led me," it says in effect; "in this leading I believe." Thus like the martyrs and the heroes of chivalry and all true men, he uttered his *Credo* in the face of death.

The Testament runs thus (and you who read it may see therein as in a mirror, the soul of this long story of Francis' life; and that you may have a more distinct remembrance I indicate its several articles of belief in the margin):—

His belief in the service of lepers:

The Lord gave to me Brother Francis thus to begin to do penance: for when I was in sin it seemed to me too bitter a thing to see lepers, and the Lord Himself led me amongst them, and I dealt mercifully with them.[2] And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me, was changed into sweetness of soul and body; and afterwards I tarried yet awhile and then left the world.

in churches,

And the Lord gave me such faith in churches that I would simply pray and say: We adore

[1] Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1226) says that the Testament was written at the Celle of Cortona, when Francis rested there on his journey back from Siena. This seems very doubtful, for at the Celle Francis had a relapse owing to an increase of dropsy (Cf. I Celano, 105), and would hardly be able to dictate a lengthy document such as the Testament. The tradition which assigns the writing of the Testament to the Porziuncola seems therefore more probable. Gregory IX in the bull "*Quo elongati*" (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 68) says Francis wrote it "*circa ultimum vitæ suæ*," but this phrase might of course refer to any time within a few months of his death.

[2] Some versions read: "I made a sojourn with them"—"*feci moram* (instead of *misericordiam*) *cum illis*". *Vide Miscel. Franc.* III. p. 70. But in I Celano, 17, we find the passage quoted as in the text.

Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Thy Churches which are in all the world; and we bless Thee because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

in priests and the Roman Church.

After that, the Lord gave me and He gives me still so much faith in priests who live according to the form of the Holy Roman Church, on account of their Order, that if they persecuted me, I would have recourse to them. And if I had as much wisdom as Solomon had,

That priests must be reverenced;

and I found priests of this world, poor and lowly, I would not preach against their will in the parishes in which they live. And these and all other [priests] I desire to fear, love, and honour as my lords; and I am unwilling to consider sin in them, because in them I see the Son of God, and they are my lords. And I do this because in this world I see nothing corporally of the Most High Son of God Himself except His most Holy Body and Blood which they receive and which they alone administer to others.

as also the mysteries of the altar,

And I desire that these most holy mysteries be above all things honoured, and revered and placed in precious places.

and the Names and Words of God;

Wheresoever I should find His most holy Names and written Words in unseemly places, I desire to gather them up and I beseech that they be gathered up and put in some becoming place.

and theologians and ministers of

And all theologians and those who minister to us the most Divine Words we must honour and revere as those who minister to us spirit and life.

the Divine Words.

His belief concerning the Rule

And after that the Lord had given me some brothers, no one showed me what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I must live according to the form of the Holy Gospel: and I made it to be written in few words and simply; and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me.

and the life of the fraternity.

And those who came to receive this life, gave to the poor all that they possessed and they were content with one tunic patched within and without, those who wished, and with a cord and breeches: and we wished for nothing more. We clerics said the office like other clerics, the lay brothers said the *Paternoster*, and willingly enough we abode in churches. And we were simple and subject to all. And I worked with my hands, and so I [still] desire to work, and I firmly desire that all the other brethren work in some honest employment. Let those who know not [how to work] learn, not through desire to receive the price of their labour but for example's sake and to repel idleness. And when the price of our labour is not given to us, let us have recourse to the table of the Lord, begging alms from door to door. The Lord revealed to me this salutation, that we should say: "The Lord give thee peace". Let the brethren take care not on any account to receive churches, poor dwelling-places or any other things which are built for them, unless they be such as become the holy poverty which we have vowed in the

Rule, always dwelling here as pilgrims and strangers. I strictly command all the brethren by obedience that wherever they may be, they shall not dare to ask any letter at the Roman Court, either themselves or by any intermediary person, neither for a church nor for any other place, nor under pretext of preaching, nor on account of bodily persecution; but wherever they are not received, let them flee into another land to do penance with the blessing of God. And I firmly desire to obey the Minister-General of this fraternity and that guardian whom it shall please him to give me. And I desire to be so held in his hands that I cannot go or act beyond obedience and his will, because he is my master. And although I am simple and weak, nevertheless I desire always to have a cleric who will perform the office for me as is contained in the Rule. And all the other brothers are bound to obey their guardians and to perform the office according to the Rule. And should any be found who do not perform the office according to the Rule and who wish in some way to change it, or who are not Catholics, let all the brothers, wheresoever they are, be bound by obedience, wheresoever one of those be found to present him to the nearest custos of the place where he is found. And the custos is strictly bound by obedience to guard him strongly as a prisoner both by day and by night, so that he cannot be taken out of his hands, until he shall personally place him in

That the brethren must be Catholics; and that heretics must be delivered up.

the hands of his minister. And the minister is strictly obliged by obedience to send him by such brothers as shall guard him day and night as a prisoner until they present him before the lord of Ostia, who is the lord, protector and corrector of the whole fraternity.

This is not another Rule but a remembrance.

And the brethren shall not say: This is another Rule; for this is but a remembrance, admonition and exhortation and my testament, which I, Brother Francis, your little one, make for you my blessed brethren, to the end that we may observe in a more Catholic way the Rule which we have promised to the Lord. And let the Minister-General and all the other ministers and custodes be bound by obedience not to add to, nor take away from, these words; and let them always have this writing with them beside the Rule. And in all Chapters which they hold, when they read the Rule let them read also these words. And I strictly command by obedience all my brethren, whether clerics or lay-brethren, that they put no glosses on the Rule nor on these words, saying: So they are to be understood. But, as the Lord gave me simply and purely to speak and to write the Rule and these words, so you shall understand them simply and purely, and with holy doing observe them unto the end. And whosoever shall observe these things let him be filled in heaven with the

A blessing.

blessing of the Most High Father, and on earth with the blessing of His beloved Son, together with the Most Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, and

> all the Powers of heaven and all the saints. And I, Brother Francis, your little one and servant, in so far as I can, confirm unto you within and without this most holy blessing. Amen.[1]

It was nigh upon the feast of St. Michael, heaven's sentinel, when Francis made his last preparations to meet the summoner, Death. Full deliberately would he die, even as he had lived. Then knowing that the days were few, he bade the brethren send a messenger quickly to Rome to the Lady Giacoma di Settesoli—she who had befriended him so often in the past,—to beg her to come to him[2] and bring with her a fitting panoply for death: a gown of grey cloth, a napkin to cover his face, a cushion for his head, wax-candles to burn at his bier and some sweet-cake such as she sometimes had made for him when he visited her house.[3] For at the end Francis would make a feast for his body that it might share in the joy of his soul.[4]

But before the messenger had started, the brethren were aroused by the tramping of horses and the buzz of many voices at their very gate, and the porter came hurrying to say that the Lady Giacoma with her sons and a great retinue was waiting without. "Now blessed be God," replied

[1] Cf. *Opuscula S. P. F.* (Quaracchi), pp. 76-82, and pp. 173-176; Fr. Paschal Robinson, *The Writings of St. Francis*, p. 79 *seq.* There is no question of the authenticity of the Testament: it is cited textually in I Celano, 17; II Celano, 163; 3 Soc. VIII. 29; *Leg. Maj.* III. 2. Also in the bull of Gregory IX. "*Quo elongati*" (Sbaralea, *Bull. Franc.* I. p. 68) and in St. Bonav. *Epist. de tribus Quaest.* (Opera Omnia [Quaracchi], tom. VIII. p. 335).

[2] It is evident from Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 37, that Francis desired the Lady Giacoma to visit him, and not merely as the *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 112, might be taken to imply that she should send him the things needed for his burial.

[3] "*Mostaccinolo*, a confection of almonds and sugar and other things" (*Spec. Perfect.* loc. cit.).

[4] See also the incident of the parsley he fancied, II Celano, 51.

Francis, "Who has sent our Brother Giacoma to us. Open the gates and lead her inside. For the rule concerning women is not for Brother Giacoma." So the Lady Giacoma was brought into the cell where Francis lay; and greatly did all the brethren marvel when they saw that she brought with her all that Francis had bidden them ask her to bring. But the Lady Giacoma told them how she was praying and a voice spoke to her spirit, telling her to hasten if she wished to see the blessed Francis, and to take with her the things she had brought. Glad indeed were the Lady Giacoma and all her company that they had arrived to see the saint alive; and the gladness mingled with the pity of their tears: it might have been a festive home-gathering rather than a meeting for a burial. For a time after their coming, Francis seemed to regain strength, so that the brethren hoped desperately that his end would yet be not so near at hand. But the Lady Giacoma wished to remain now until the end: and Francis bade her remain until the Sunday, saying he would die on the Saturday. So sending back part of her retinue, she took up her abode near the cells of the brethren, she and her sons and some few of her esquires.[1]

Beyond the woods at San Damiano the spirit of Clare was keeping vigil over the death-bed at the Porziuncola: and the more harmoniously since Clare herself was stricken with sickness.[2] Right willingly she acknowledged the claim of the chapel in the wood to hold him at the last, for it was the shrine and symbol of his vocation and of her own vows: and valiantly she submitted to give to him that comfort of the spirit. Yet was she sorely stricken, knowing that in this life she would not again see nor converse with him: and

[1] Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 37, 38; *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier] cap. 112 Bern. a Bessa, *Liber de Laud.* VIII.; *Fioretti*, IV. Consid.

[2] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier] cap. 108.

upon her there was already the sorrow of the orphaned ; and for that she wept bitterly. Then one of the brethren brought to Francis the message of her grief, and at the telling he was greatly moved ; and he bethought him how best he might console her, since now he could not visit her. After awhile he bade a brother write down these words :—

> "I, little Brother Francis, desire to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ, and of His most holy mother, and to persevere therein until the end. And I beseech you, my ladies, and I give you counsel that you live always in this most holy life and poverty. And be greatly careful of yourselves lest by the teaching or counsel of any one, you in any way or at any time draw away from it." [1]

This writing he bade the messenger take back to Clare, saying : "Go and tell Sister Clare to put aside all sorrow and sadness, for though she cannot now see me, yet before her death both she herself and her Sisters shall see me and have great comfort of me".[2] Now after his death the brethren remembering these words, brought his body to San Damiano, as we shall further on relate, that Clare and the Sisters might gaze once more upon it. And this was a partial fulfilment of the promise. But to the soul of Clare the promise which brought her sure comfort, meant more than this. She who understood Francis with the understanding of an utterly kindred spirit, knew that he had sent her a pledge of the spirit rather than of the body. In the after-years when Clare and the Sisters of San Damiano were to be the foremost de-

[1] The text is given in the Rule of St. Clare, cap. vi. Vide *Leg. Seraph. Textus Originales* (Quaracchi), p. 63 ; and in *Opuscula* (Quaracchi), p. 76. Cf. *Test. S. Claræ, Boll. Acta SS.* die 12 *Aug.* Tom. II. p. 747 ; *Leg. Seraph. Textus*, p. 276.

[2] *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier] cap. 108.

fenders of his ideal, then would his spirit be with them to be their stay and comfort; and they would know that he was with them; and that would be their joy. Such comfort it was that Francis sent to Clare and her Sisters as his dying legacy: and no greater comfort could he send. And Clare understood in this as in all else that concerned the secret of his soul.

One last care now remained, and that was for his Lady Poverty and the home she had made with him in the Porziuncola. Very tenderly had his heart grown round this place: for in truth it was his special dower to the bride of his love, and he would not that it should ever pass away from her. Gathering the brethren around him, he besought them never to desert it. "See, my brothers," he pleaded, 'that you never leave this place: if you are thrust out on one side, enter it again on the other: for truly this place is holy and the dwelling of God. Here when we were but a few, the Most High multiplied us; here with the light of His wisdom, he enlightened the hearts of His poor ones; here with the fire of His love, He set our wills on fire: here whosoever prays with a devout heart, will obtain what he asks, and whosoever offends will be more hardly punished. Wherefore, O sons, hold this place of God's dwelling, worthy of all honour; and with all your heart in the voice of exultation and praise, confess to God therein." [1]

The shadows were now fast closing, ushering in the last solemn act of that evening sacrifice. St. Michael's day had come and passed, bringing doubtless to Francis its own call from the leader of heaven's army, whom he had been accustomed to honour with a knight's true devotion.[2]

Francis now prepared to lay down his offering upon the Altar of his Lord. Wishing to pledge once more his faith to

[1] 1 Celano, 106; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 83. [2] Cf. II Celano, 197.

Poverty, he called the brethren around him and bade them lay him upon the bare ground and remove his tunic. Then with face turned upwards to the heavens and his left hand covering the wound in his right side, he said to those around: "I have done what it was mine to do; may Christ teach you what is yours". At that the brethren wept aloud. But the Father Guardian divining his thought, brought to Francis a tunic, and breeches and a sackcloth cap, and said to him: "know that this tunic and breeches and cap are lent thee by me in holy obedience; and that thou mightest know that thou hast no right of property in them, I deprive thee of all power of giving them to anyone else". At these words the face of Francis beamed with a great joy, for he saw in this loan, a pledge that he had kept faith with Lady Poverty.[1]

A while afterwards with a great content of soul, he bade two of the brethren whom he specially loved, sing to him in a loud exultant voice the verse of the "Canticle of Brother Sun" which declares the praise of God in Sister Death. But whilst yet they sang, his own feeble voice broke into that hymn of a dauntless hope, the 141st psalm:[2] "I cried to the Lord with my voice; with my voice to the Lord I made supplication". Every verse of that psalm might be taken as a text for the unfolding of the singer's story; each verse wending towards the final prayer: "Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy Name; the just wait for me until Thou reward me".[3]

[1] II Celano, 214; *Leg. Maj.* XIV. 4 Francis used a cap to cover the scars left by the cauterizing of his eyes.

[2] i.e. according to the Vulgate: the 142nd according to the Authorized Version.

[3] St. Bonaventure (*Leg. Maj.* XIV. 5) places this singing of the psalm at the very end and makes Francis die singing the last verse. And this version of the story has been generally followed by later biographers. But in the narrative of events leading up to Francis' death in I Celano, 109 *seq.* it precedes the

Thinking that the end must surely be nigh, Bernard da Quintavalle, the first of his noble companions and the most revered, said to him: "Ah, gentle Father, alas! thy sons are fatherless now and the true light of their eyes is taken from them. Be mindful of the orphans whom thou leavest and forgive them their offences and gladden them all, both those who are present and those who are absent, with thy holy blessing." And Francis made reply: "See, my son, I am called by God: I forgive my brethren, whether present or absent, all their offences and faults and, as far as I can, I absolve them: do thou proclaim this to them and bless them all for me". But to soothe them in their grief he spoke to those about him comforting words; and he besought them to love God and Poverty and "to put the Holy Gospel before all other ordinances".[1] And then they drew near and he blessed them, laying his hands upon their heads: but to Brother Bernard he gave a blessing of special tenderness and solicitude, because he was the first of those who had come to him: and he bade all the brethren hold him in particular honour as the chief and foremost of their knightly band.[2]

blessing and the reading of the Gospel. In II Celano, 217 we read that after giving his blessing to the brethren, Francis lived a few days: "*protade paucos dies, qui usque ad transitum,*" etc.

[1] II Celano, 216.

[2] I Celano, 109, does not mention Bernard da Quintavalle by name, but says: "*Frater quidam de assistentibus quem sanctus satis magno arcebat amore*". I think, however, that there can be little doubt that the incident he refers to is the same as that recorded in *Fioretti*, cap. VI.; and Chron. XXIV. Gen. (*Anal. Franc.* III. p. 42). True in II Celano, 216, where this second blessing is again referred to, it is said: "*Incipiens a vicario suo capitibus singulorum imposuit;*" but Celano omits the details, and there is nothing in this phrase which contradicts the story in the *Fioretti*, for there too we read that Francis first placed his hand upon the head of Elias, though he had called for Bernard. In the sequel, at Brother Bernard's suggestion he placed his left hand on the head of Elias at the same time as he held his right

Then, with his mind still bent upon the imitation of his Lord, he bade them bring some bread, and because he was too weak to break it himself, he had it broken into small pieces, and to each brother he gave a piece: and so he gave his last commandment of mutual love as Christ his Master had given it at the Last Supper.[1]

Now his earthly cares were finished: yet Sister Death lingered on her way. Francis awaited her coming with song: content that she should come when his Lord willed. Around his bed the brethren sang the song he loved most, the "Canticle of Brother Sun".

But at length they knew that Death was already at the door. With chivalrous salutation Francis exclaimed: "Welcome, Sister Death!" and turning to his physician, he bade him as a herald announce her coming boldly; for he added, "She is to me the gate of life". To the brethren he said:

hand on the head of Bernard; thus saving the dignity of the Vicar-General. The words given in I Celano, 109: "*quibus tu hæc denuntians, ex parte mea omnibus benedices.*" certainly lend colour to the more explicit commission given to Bernard in the *Fioretti*. It is certainly singular that Francis should have commissioned Bernard and not Elias, to convey his last blessing to the brethren. But that it was not Elias who was thus commissioned is fairly evident since Celano, who in the *Prima Legenda* is always explicit regarding the privileges accorded to Elias, does not attribute this privilege to him. There is nothing inconsistent in the *Fioretti* story with the known history of Francis. If it is objected that Francis could not have said: "*Sia il principale de tuoi fratelli*," etc., one has only to remember Francis' descriptions of true obedience, as not merely a submission to legal superiors but as implying a ready submission, prompted by love, to all one's neighbours: and this wider obedience he would have both superiors and subjects practise towards all. (Cf. *Regula* I. cap. v.) Why not then in a pre-eminent degree towards Bernard, the first Friar Minor after Francis himself? Further, may not one see a delicate reference in II Celano, 216: "*Nullus sibi hanc benedictionem usurpet . . . sed portius ad officium deturquendum*" to the curse pronounced by Francis, according to the *Fioretti* story, against those who should deal injuriously with Bernard?

[1] II Celano, 217; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 88.

"When you see me at my extremity, put me upon the ground as you saw me three days ago and when I am dead leave me there for such space of time as it takes a man leisurely to walk a mile".[1]

So at the end they laid him habitless on the bare earth. Divining his wish the brethren had prepared to read to him in his last moments the Gospel of the Passion according to St. John; but Francis, not knowing their intention, himself asked that that Gospel should be read. Then when the reading was over he bade them lay him upon sackcloth and sprinkle him with ashes in anticipation of his burial: for in his courtesy he would welcome death in all its dread offices. And whilst the brethren stood around in solemn reverence and sad expectancy, he died.[2] It was then just after the hour of sunset. Outside the cell a multitude of larks had gathered in the twilight and were sending their melodies joyously through the still air.[3] And one of the brothers, a holy man, at that same moment saw a brilliant orb of light borne by a little cloud, ascending as it were across many waters in a straight course to heaven.[4]

But within the cell the brethren were gazing in amazement and awe upon the lifeless body, forgetting for awhile their loss in the wonderful thing they saw. For the body so long contracted with pain, became supple and smooth and

[1] II Celano, 217; cf. *Leg. Maj.* XIV. 4.

[2] I Celano, 110; *Leg. Maj.* XIV. 5. There is a discrepancy between these two authors. According to Celano the reading began at chapter XII.: "*Ante sex dies Paschæ*"; according to St. Bonaventure, at chapter XIII.: "*Ante diem festum Paschæ*". Cf. Montgomery Carmichael, "*The Gospel read to S. Francis 'in transitu,'*" in *Dublin Review*, April, 1903.

[3] *Leg. Maj.* XIV. 6; Celano, *Tract. de Mirac.* 32.

[4] I Celano, 110; *Leg. Maj.* XIV. 6. According to Chron. XXIV. Gen. (*Anal. Franc.* III. p. 226), this brother was a Brother James. He is mentioned in the martyrology of Fortunatus Hueber under 7 June.

straight, and the dark flesh became exceeding white, and into the eyes long dull with disease, there came as it were the light of day. And then for the first time, most of them saw the five wounds of the stigmata; and it seemed to them as though they were gazing upon the very Body of Christ Himself. And all that night crowds from the city came hurrying in to see this miracle which had been so carefully hid from the sight of men: and all the people wept aloud, but it was more for joy than for sorrow.[1] Early the next morning they bore the body of the saint in solemn state to the little church of San Giorgio within the city, where Francis had learned his letters and preached his first sermon; for the citizens would have no delay lest the Perugians might come swiftly and take the body. All the city, it seemed, took part in the procession: some held lighted tapers, but most of them carried boughs of olive and other trees; and as they went along the singing of hymns alternated with the blare of trumpets. It was not the sad carrying of a man to his grave but the triumphant translation of a saint's relics.

Remembering the message Francis had sent to Clare from his death-bed, the brethren would not take the shorter way to the city through the great gate, but went round by San Damiano; and there they carried the body into the church, and certain of the brothers took the body from its coffin and held it in their arms at the opened grille at which the sisters received the Holy Communion. Then Clare and all the sisters wept bitterly, realizing more poignantly their loss in the sweet presence of the dead. But when they all had kissed the wounded hands, the procession again formed and

[1] 1 Celano, 112, 113. See the Letter of Brother Elias to Gregory of Naples (Bœhmer, *Analekten*, p. 90).

went on its way until it came to the church of San Giorgio. There they laid the body in a temporary shrine to await the building of the great church which was to be the glory of the city and of all the land of Umbria. The day was the fourth of October, in the year 1226.[1]

Less than two years later, on 16 July, 1228, Francis was canonized by his friend Cardinal Ugolino, now become Pope under the title of Gregory IX.[2] And straightway by order of the Pontiff, Brother Elias set his imperious genius to the construction of the great church which was to be at once the saint's sepulchre and the monument of a world's homage.[3] Hither on 25 May, 1230, the body of Francis was carried and secretly buried; but the story of that second burial belongs not so much to the history of Francis as to another history.[4] Even in its eager desire to honour him the world must needs kick against him, not understanding the spirit which dwelt in him. He was not of the world. And yet the world loved, and in its blundering fashion, worshipped him. It was so in his life; it was even so in his death. But whilst the world went on its blundering way, there were some, and they were not a few, who both loved and understood. Francis had not lived in vain.

[1] Cf. I Celano, 116-18; *Leg. Maj.* xv. 1-6; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 108; *Fioretti*, iv. Consid. According to the ecclesiastical usage of the time, the day was reckoned from the decline of the sun, i.e. the hour of vespers, and not from midnight. Thus Francis died according to our style of computing the day, at sunset on 3 October, and was buried on 4 October.

[2] The bull of canonization was published on 19 July. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* i. p. 42 *seq.*

[3] By Papal authority money for the building of the church was collected throughout Europe. Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* i. p. 46; Glassberger, in *Anal. Franc.* ii. p. 56.

[4] *Vide* letter of Gregory IX "*Speravimus*," Sbaralea, *Bull.* i. p. 66 *seq*; Eccleston, *op. cit.* pp. 80-82; Chron. xxiv. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* iii. p. 212.

APPENDIX I.

THE PRIMITIVE RULE OF ST. FRANCIS.

That the Primitive Rule approved orally by Innocent III is contained in the so-called Regula Prima of 1221,[1] there can be, I think, little doubt.

1. The Regula Prima professes in the prologue to be that confirmed by Innocent III. As the Regula Prima stands this would be impossible; for Innocent III died in 1216, and many of the ordinances in that Rule are easily traceable to a later date. Yet Francis would not have retained this prologue if the Primitive Rule was not incorporated in the Regula Prima.

2. But anyone who reads the Regula Prima will be struck by its patchwork character as regards style: it has manifestly been built up by accumulation; it is not homogeneous.

At times the ingrafting of new additions is clumsily done, as e.g. cap. II. concerning the goods of novices; cap. X., where it goes on to say that the brethren shall have no power or domination amongst themselves. Again there are repetitions, as though the legislator was re-enacting a former ordinance with increased emphasis; e.g. in capp. III. and IX. it is laid down that the brethren may eat of whatever food is set before them.

Yet, again, the difference in character and style between different passages is very marked. There is a lack of consistency of tone. The voice of the idealist alternates at one time with that of the legalist, at another with that of the master evidently arguing with those who doubt; e.g. compare cap. I. or cap. XIV. or the opening of cap. IX. with cap. XV. and cap. VIII.; and the difference is not merely a difference of subject-matter; the tone is different: there is a difference in the immediate outlook, like the difference between sunshine and a grey day. Some of the passages glow with the simplicity of the apostle in the first time of his enthusiasm, with his idealism yet unbruised by experience with the world:

[1] Cf. *Opuscula* (Quaracchi), pp. 26-62.

and in these passages you find something of the sublime universality of the Gospel. Other passages are manifestly written in view of actual contingencies and lack the glow and joyous fervour of the former.

3. Now it is undoubtedly those passages which glow with the simplicity of the idealism of the primitive Franciscan life, which belong to the Primitive Rule. The other passages were written afterwards to incorporate either capitular decrees, e.g. in cap. VII. the warning against "sad hypocrites"; or papal injunctions, e.g. in cap. II. concerning novices and in cap. V. concerning those who wander about without obediences; or they were ordinances made to meet new situations, as cap. XVI. concerning missions to the infidels, and cap. XVIII. concerning the holding of Chapters.

In one chapter—cap. XXII.—we have apparently a summary of St. Francis's admonitions to the brethren.

Now in regard to the Primitive Rule, Celano tells us that Francis wrote it "for himself and his brethren, present and to come, simply and in few words," and that he used chiefly the words of the Gospel, after whose perfection alone he aspired (I Celano, 32); and St. Bonaventure says: "He wrote for himself and his brethren in simple words a rule of life in which, taking the observance of the Gospel as an inviolable foundation, he inserted a few other things which seemed necessary for a uniform mode of life" (*Leg. Maj.* III. 8).

The Primitive Rule, therefore, was brief and chiefly consisted of passages from the Gospel, but with a few enactments necessary for the common life of the fraternity.

M. Sabatier (*Vie de S. François*, chap. III. p. 101 *seq.*) asserts that the Primitive Rule was nothing else than the passages of the Gospel which Francis had read to his first companions—he evidently refers to the reading of the Gospel in the Church of St. Nicholas (*vide supra*)—together with certain regulations concerning manual labour and the occupations of the brethren. But this is putting a limitation upon the passages of the Gospel used by Francis in his Primitive Rule, which is unwarranted by the descriptions given by Celano and St. Bonaventure.

We may surely assume that the dominant characteristics of the primitive life, as we know it from history, were reflected in the Primitive Rule, and that they for the most part found an evangelical formula there. And that is just what we find when we collect together those passages of the Regula Prima which bear the manifest impress of the primitive simplicity and idealism of the Franciscan spirit. Again, anyone conversant with

the life and character of Francis would expect of the Primitive Rule that it would be almost exclusively an expression of principles rather than a code of practical regulations or of "constitutions". Francis was from beginning to end an idealist and a poet. In the practical application of his ideals he waited on circumstance; he made a practical regulation only when a situation arose, which demanded a practical decision, and then his decision was formulated by the occasion: he never seems to have run ahead of the occasion, but he waited until the actual demand for a decision came to him. Thus he acted in the various stages of his "conversion": we find the same mode of action in the development of his vocation and apostolate.

As regards the additions to the Primitive Rule in the Regula Prima, they may be summed up as:—

1. Capitular ordinances.
2. Judicial or prophetic warnings against evident dangers.
3. Papal decrees.
4. All that concerns the ministers, and also clerics as separate from lay-brothers.
5. Those passages which presuppose that the brethren are widely scattered, as where phrases of this sort occur: "universis fratribus"; "ubicumque sunt" (or "fuerint").

With these principles of exegesis before us we may now proceed to give an analysis of the Regula Prima in detail. It will be seen that the result obtained differs in many instances from that arrived at by Karl Müller (*Die Anfänge des Minoritenordens*, pp. 14-25) who seems to me to have included in the Primitive Rule certain portions of the Regula Prima which belong to a somewhat later date, and even passages which I incline to think were inserted as late as 1221.

ANALYSIS OF REGULA PRIMA.

Text.	*Remarks.*
PROLOGUE.	
In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sti. Amen.	Primitive.

*** ***

Haec est vita quam frater Franciscus petiit sibi concedi et confirmari a domino papa Innocentio. . . . Et alii fratres teneantur fratri Francisco et ejus successoribus obedire.

Primitive; but probably inserted by the Pope. Celano in speaking of the Primitive Rule, quotes the phrase of this passage: "fratribus suis habitis et futuris" (I Celano, 32). 3 Soc. 52, says: "The other brothers *according to the precept of the lord Pope* in like manner promised obedience and reverence to the Blessed Francis".

M. Sabatier (cf. *De l'authenticité de la légende de S. François*, p. 20, note) denies that these words of 3 Soc. refer to the Primitive Rule; but that is simply because they militate against M. Sabatier's particular theory regarding the Primitive Rule.

Also it is asserted in *Analecta Bollandiana*, XIX. p. 129, that the passage "*Et alii fratres teneantur*," etc., is an interpolation in the Regula Prima from the Rule of 1223. But this is mere assumption. It is more probable that the words were transferred from the Regula I into the Regula II.

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CHAPTER I.

Regula et vita istorum fratrum . . . et vitam aeternam possidebit.

The whole of this chapter is primitive. The earliest life is entirely shaped by it; e.g. in regard to the passage from Matthew XIX. 29: "*Si quis vult venire ad me*" etc., cf. 3 Soc. 45: "*Sollicite etiam petebant ne mitterentur ad terram ubi nati erant*," etc.

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CHAPTER II.

Si quis divina inspiratione . . . recipiatur ab eis.

Primitive. The words: "*si quis divina inspiratione*" are quite in St. Francis' style of speaking. Compare the idea of Divine calling in his words to Bro. Giles, *Vita B. F. Aegidii* [ed. Lemmens], p. 39. The phrase is used in the *Forma vivendi* Francis gave S. Clare (*Opuscula* [ed. Quaracchi], p. 75) and in Regula II. cap. XII.

So also the words "*benigne recipiatur ab eis*" are quite characteristic of Francis' spirit. Cf. I Celano, 27-31; *Vita B. F. Aegidii*, loc. cit. I. pp. 39-40.

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Quodsi fuerit firmus accipere . . . diligenter exponat.

This passage, as it stands, could only have been written after the institution of Ministers-Provincial in 1217; and it is probably a regulation against some actual abuse. Francis himself advised and assisted Bernard da Quintavalle in disposing of his goods. But later experience in this matter as in others, may have made Francis take a stricter view.

***

Si vult et potest spiritualiter . . . pauperibus studeat erogare.

***

This is certainly primitive. From the beginning Francis insisted upon the candidates distributing their goods to the poor. Probably the contingent phrase "si vult et potest spiritualiter et sine impedimento" was inserted by the Pope, as a measure of prudence. Cf. II Celano, 80, 81.

***

Caveant autem alii pauperes

***

As it stands this passage is of later date. But some such prohibition of receiving any part of the goods of novices was in force quite early in the fraternity, as is evident from II Celano, 67. It is curious that the warning against meddling with the goods of novices is given twice, almost in the same words. Quite manifestly this chapter has been subjected to frequent interpolations.

***

Et cum reversus . . . si necesse fuerit, cingulum et braccas.

***

Of later date. The regulations concerning novices are not earlier than 22 September, 1220, when Honorius III published the Bull "*Cum secundum*" (*Bull. Franc.* I, p. 6). The permission to have two tunics is opposed to primitive practice. Cf. I Celano, 39: "Sola tunica erant contenti". Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 3; *Testamentum S. Franc.*

***

Et omnes fratres, vilibus . . . in domibus regum sunt.

***

Primitive.

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Et licet dicantur hypocritae . . . regno coelorum.

Doubtful. We read in Celano how the friars at an early period were denounced as hypocrites (I Celano, 46). This admonition was probably designed to meet similar circumstances.

***

CHAPTER III.

Dicit Dominus: Hoc genus . . . quolibet die.

Of capitular origin. In the beginning of the Order the brethren said the *Pater Noster* and *Adoramus Te Christe* instead of the ecclesiastical office: as Celano and St. Bonaventure bear witness (I Celano, 45; *Leg. Maj.* IV. 3). Celano gives as the reason that the brethren were ignorant of the office: "*in simplicitate spiritus ambulantes adhuc ecclesiasticum officium ignorabant;*" St. Bonaventure, that they had not the necessary books: "*pro eo quod nondum ecclesiasticos libros habebant*".

Note that both Celano and St. Bonaventure are speaking of the time *following* the approbation of the Rule.

The passages which allow the brethren who can read, whether clerics or lay-brothers, to have books for saying office can hardly have been put in on Francis' initiative: cf. II Celano, 195; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 4. Probably these passages were inserted at a General Chapter on the initiative of the ministers.

***

Omnes fratres jejunent . . . secundem Evangelium.

Doubtful. Giordano da Giano (in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 6) says: "*secundum primam regulam fratres feria quarta et sexta jejunabant*". From the beginning the brethren would observe the accustomed lents of the Church, and probably others according to their devotion. The lent preceding Christmas as it stands in the text is but a lengthening of the Advent Lent which in many places began at St. Martin's feast, and in other places at the beginning of Advent. It was Francis' intense devotion to the Sacred Incarnation which probably led him to lengthen this fast. Similarly his devotion to our Lord's earthly life led him to begin the Easter Lent immediately after the feast of the Epiphany, because on that day the Church celebrates (amongst other mysteries) the baptism

of Jesus Christ, and immediately after His baptism our Lord began His fast in the desert. Quite possibly, therefore, these fasts may have been of primitive observance; as would also be the permission "to eat of all foods set before them". But whether the passage as it stands was substantially in the primitive Rule, is doubtful. In reference to Giordano's statement, it is noteworthy that the Humiliati fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays.

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CHAPTER IV.

In nomine Domini omnes fratres, etc.

Of later origin: probably capitular, after the establishment of the Provinces in 1217.

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CHAPTER V.

Ideoque animas vestras . . . sed male habentibus.

Capitular; after the institution of Chapters and ministers.

***

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Omnes fratres non habeant aliquam potestatem . . . voluntarie serviant et obediant invicem. Et haec est vera et sancta obedientia D. N. J. Christi.

Primitive. This passage as it stands is utterly unlike any legal enactment and breathes the simple evangelical idealism of St. Francis. Cf. 3 Soc. 41 seq.

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Et omnes fratres . . . benedicti sint a Domino.

Capitular decree in view of the troubles of 1220. Cf. Bull "*Cum Secundum*," of 22 September, 1220. Cf. II Celano, 32-4.

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CHAPTER VI.

Fratres in quibuscumque locis . . . laret pedes.

Capitular : after institution of ministers.

But the passage : "*Nullus vocetur prior sed generaliter omnes vocentur fratres minores*" may be anterior to the preceding passages. Honorius III, in the Bull "*Cum Secundum*," speaks of the ministers as "priors," and it may have been that the passage was inserted in the Rule at the Chapter of 1221, in consequence of this. On the other hand, Honorius III may have used the term in ignorance of the Rule, which was not yet solemnly approved.

***

CHAPTER VII.

Omnes fratres . . . in eadem domo sunt.

Doubtful. Celano relates that it was on hearing the words of the Rule, "Et sint minores" being read aloud, that Francis exclaimed : "I will that this fraternity be called the Order of Friars Minor" (I Celano, 38).

If we knew at what date the brethren took the name of Friars Minor, we should have more exact ground upon which to base our decision as regards this passage. I incline to think that it was inserted very soon after the approbation of the Rule, with the rapid increase in the number of the brethren and their diffusion abroad.

Possibly the wording of the opening paragraphs may have been slightly changed in a later revision of the Rule. Celano quotes the phrase alluded to as "*Et sint minores*"; whereas the actual phrase is as : "*sed sint minores*".

***

Et Fratres qui sciunt laborare . . . sicut alii fratres.

Primitive. Cf. I Celano, 39-40. "*Diebus vero manibus propriis qui noverant laborabant*," etc. ; "*Nullum officium exercere volebant de quo posset scandalum exoriri*," etc. Cf. *Testamentum S. Franc.* : "*Et ego manibus meis laborabam*," etc. Also *Vita B. F. Ægidii*, loc. cit. p. 42 *seq.*

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Et liceat eis habere ferramenta et instrumenta suis artibus necessaria.	Doubtful. From the style I think it to be a somewhat later addition.
***	***
Omnes fratres studeant bonis operibus . . insistere debent.	Later : probably inserted by Cæsar of Speyer in 1221. The quotations are from SS. Jerome and Anselm. (cf. *Opuscula*, p. 34, notes 1 and 2.)
***	***
Caveant sibi fratres . . benigne recipiatur.	Later. As it stands this paragraph is of later date when the brethren had acquired "loci" and hermitages.
***	***
Et caveant sibi . . . convenienter gratiosos.	Capitular. Cf. II Celano, 128.
***	***
CHAPTER VIII.	
Dominus praecipit . . . circumeant.	Later. Evidently from the admonitory style it was written in view of certain dangers or abuses.
***	***
CHAPTER IX.	
Omnes fratres studeant . . . vadant pro eleemosynis.	Primitive. Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 44 ; [ed. Lemmens], no. 12.
***	***
Et non verecundentur . . . praemium a Domino.	Later : probably originally an admonition addressed to the brethren. Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 18 ; Lemmens, *De Legenda Veteri* in *Doc. Antiqua*, fasc. II. p. 94.

Also cf. *Epistola* I. in *Opuscula*, p. 91: "*Homines enim omnia perdunt*," etc.

***

Et secure . . . non habet legem.

Later. The passage referring to the use of foods: "*Et quandocumque necessitas supervenerit*," etc., is probably capitular decree of 1221, in answer to the innovations of the Vicars-General during Francis' absence in the East. Cf. *Chron. Jordani*, no. 11, in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 4.

***

CHAPTER X.

Si quis fratrum, etc.

Later. I judge this from the style (e.g. "*Ubicumque fuerit*"). There is a summary of this chapter in II Celano, 175.

***

CHAPTER XI.

Et omnes fratres . . . Servi inutiles sumus.

Primitive. It sets forth one of the most distinguishing marks of the first friars—their fear of useless and uncharitable words. Cf. 3 Soc. 46 *et passim*; I Celano, 41, 54. Cf. II Celano, 182, where there is an evident comparison between the primitive and later days.

***

Et non irascantur, etc.

Doubtful. From the interweaving of scriptural texts taken mostly from the epistles I doubt whether it can be ascribed to St. Francis. More likely it is the work of Cæsar of Speyer. Cf. *Chron. Jordani*, no. 15, in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 5.

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CHAPTER XII.

Omnes fratres, etc.

Later. It contemplates the presence of priests amongst the brethren, whereas it is doubtful whether there was even one priest amongst those who went with Francis to Rome. Moreover, Francis himself received SS. Clare and Agnes to obedience in 1212; also the anchoress Praxedis. Cf. Celano, *Trac. de Mirac.* 181. This regulation, therefore, must have been of later origin.

incline to regard this chapter as written in 1221, on account of the abuses of John de Compello and others.

Cf. *Chron. Jordani*, no. 13, in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 5. Possibly, however, the first paragraph was written earlier than 1221. The exacting of oaths of obedience was a very common practice in the thirteenth century. Master would thus bind their scholars to follow them. Cf. Rashdall, *Universities*, Vol. I. p. 172.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Si quis, etc. — Later. (Cf. "habitu ordinis".)

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CHAPTER XIV.

Quando fratres, etc. — Primitive. cf. I. Celano, 17; 3 Soc. 44.

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CHAPTER XV.

Injungo omnibus, etc. — Later. (Cf. "tam clericis tam laicis".)

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CHAPTER XVI.

Dicit Dominus, etc. — Later, written in view of foreign missions, probably in 1219 or 1221.

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CHAPTER XVII.

Nullus fratrum, etc. — Later, after institution of ministers; and probably not earlier than 1220.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Quolibet anno, etc. — Later, after institution of the Chapters.

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CHAPTER XIX.

Omnes fratres sint catholici, etc. — Primitive. The phrase "a nostra fraternitate" indicates a very early origin. The following admonition to respect the clergy is also probably primitive. Cf. I Celano, 46; *Testamentum S. Franc.*

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CHAPTER XX.

Fratres mei "benedicti," etc. — Later. Cf. Epistola III. in *Opuscula*, p. 108.

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CHAPTER XXI.

Et hanc vel talem exhortationem, etc. — Primitive. Cf. *Vita B. F. Aegidii*, loc. cit. p. 41; 3 Soc. 33.

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CHAPTER XXII.

Attendamus. — Later. Cf. Epistola I. in *Opuscula*, pp. 89 and 94, for similar exhortations.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Omnipotens . . . detestabilis est in saecula saeculorum. — Later. (Cf. "Fratres Minores".) This and preceding chapter probably worked up by Cæsar of Speyer.

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In nomine Domini rogo omnes fratres . . . et reponant haec. — Probably primitive. Compare the ending up of the Testament.

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Et ex parte Dei . . . fratres habeant. — Later: probably 1221. Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* [ed. Sabatier], cap. 68: "*Et ideo volo quod non nominetis mihi aliquam regulam*," etc.

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Gloria Patri, etc. — Probably primitive.

APPENDIX II.

THE INDULGENCE OF THE PORZIUNCOLA.

The arguments against the authenticity of the Indulgence are based on two principal accounts: the silence of the first biographers and chroniclers, and the well-known repugnance of St. Francis to seek special privileges from the Roman Court. We will take this second objection first. It can indeed hardly be said to bear examination.

That St. Francis did forbid his friars to apply to the Roman Court for privileges is well known. At the same time he himself sought and accepted certain very great privileges.

He went to Rome for the confirmation of his Rule, though at the time there was no law obliging him to do so; he accepted the commission to preach and asked for the appointment of a Cardinal Protector. Hence he could not have meant to forbid the seeking for or acceptance of all favours from the Holy See. We must understand then the sort of privileges he meant to ban from the fraternity. It is evident from his own writings, e.g. his Testament, that he had in view privileges which he considered detrimental to the profession of evangelical humility and meekness, and especially such as would make the friars independent of the bishops and clergy in the prosecution of their missionary enterprise. Such was Francis' reverence for the priesthood that he would have his fraternity submissive to all bishops and priests in all matters that pertained to their office: he would not preach in any parish without the consent of the parish priest, nor would he dwell in any place without the bishop's leave. (Cf. Regula II. cap. IX.; *Testamentum S. Franc.*) If the clergy opposed the brethren in their ministry, the brethren were to gain over their goodwill, not by recourse to the Holy See, but by obedience and reverence (II Celano, 146, 147). But the Porziuncola indulgence was in no sense a privilege of immunity for the brethren: it was a measure of mercy for all repentant souls; it in no way set the brethren above the clergy or other

people, but was an outpouring of God's grace upon the world. That at least was how Francis viewed it. Nor could the indulgence have been obtained in any other way than by the authority of the Pope. No bishop could grant such an indulgence.

This objection, therefore, so far as it affects the authenticity of the indulgence, falls to the ground.

But the silence of the first biographers and chroniclers is a more valid objection. Whichever way we take it, this silence is a difficulty. Neither Celano nor Saint Bonaventure, nor the *Speculum Perfectionis*, nor any of the primitive legendists as much as refer to it. The chapter in the traditional Legend of the Three Companions is evidently a later addition.[1]

P. Ehrle, S.J., has indeed made a discovery which may prove of primary importance in the ultimate solution of this question. In a catalogue of MSS. which belonged in 1375 to the papal library at Avignon he found this indication: *Item in volumine signato per C epistole Augustini, Soliloquium Augustini, meditaciones Ancelmi, Hugo de claustro anima, plures epistolæ fratris Bonaventuræ de evangelica paupertate, de indulgentia Beate Marie Portuensi Assisii. . . .*" (Cf. Ehrle, *Bibliotheca Romanorum Pontificum*, vol. I. p. 463.) But until the letter "*de indulgentia*," itself is brought to light one cannot use it as evidence upon the mere indication of a catalogue; for it was not uncommon to attribute to famous writers, writings which they never wrote. Consequently I cannot follow Mgr. Faloci-Pulignani in his conclusions based upon this reference. (Cf. *Misc. Franc.* vol. x. p. 69, quoted with approval by Père René, O.M. Cap. in *Études Franciscaines*, tom. xx. p. 375, note 1.)

The question now is as to the motive of this silence. At best the argument from silence is a negative argument, and if we can find a probable motive, the value of the silence is largely, if not altogether, discounted. Various motives have been suggested. Père Gratien, O.M. Cap. (*Études Franciscaines*, tom. xviii. p. 481) suggests that in the beginning the indulgence had not the important character it afterwards assumed, and thinks this a sufficient explanation of the maintained silence.

[1] It is true the chapter on the indulgence appears in the reconstituted version of the 3 Soc. published by Padri Marcellino da Civezza and Teofilo Dominichelli; but this reconstituted text has yet to prove its own authenticity, notwithstanding the doughty championship of M. Paul Sabatier who is wholly in its favour. Cf. Bartholi, *Tractatus de Indulgentia*, ed. Sabatier, Introduction.

But the indulgence was undoubtedly an unusual favour for those days, and could not have been regarded otherwise,[1] nor can we think that in enumerating the exceptional privileges of the Porziuncola chapel (cf. I Celano, 106; II Celano, 18-20; *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 83; 3 Soc. cap. XIII.) the biographers, anxious as they were to set forth the sanctity of the place, would have omitted mention of so special a favour without some special reason.

Granting then that the indulgence really existed, we are driven to attribute the silence to a deliberate policy. Were there reasons for a policy of silence? Upon this point the story of the indulgence—the authenticity of which we shall examine further on—gives a clear indication. It tells us how the granting of the indulgence by the Pope aroused opposition amongst the cardinals. They wished Honorius to revoke the grant; and when he refused to revoke it altogether, they prevailed upon him to limit its operation to one day in the year, namely 2 August. Now we know that even towards the end of the thirteenth century and during the fourteenth, there was still opposition to the indulgence; and the story indicates that opposition was started against it from the first. Nor is the opposition unintelligible. "If this indulgence is granted," urged the cardinals, "it will bring to nought the indulgence for going beyond the seas [i.e. for the crusades] and people will think nothing of the indulgence to be gained at St. Peter's." The indulgence would, so to speak, infringe the monopoly of the constituted holy places. It is not at all unlikely that the friars, in deference to the wishes of the Curia, would cease to proclaim the indulgence, lest it should lessen the devotion of the people towards St. Peter's and the crusades; especially since the friars were shortly appointed by the Holy See as the accredited collectors for the crusades.

It may very well have been felt too that silence was necessary not merely to benefit the Holy Land, but to prevent the formal revocation of the indulgence. Yet I can hardly allow that a policy of silence based on expediency would have commended itself to Brother Leo and the Saint's

[1] Père René, loc. cit. pp. 349-50, asserts that plenary indulgences were not so rare at the time as has been generally held: but his instances are all of a generation later than St. Francis, when possibly a more liberal policy was adopted by the Holy See in consequence of the granting of the Porziuncola indulgence. Precedents have a way of repeating and even expanding themselves.

companions, had it not been imposed upon them as a sacred duty by Francis himself. Their zeal would assuredly have escaped their discretion.

But those who know the character of Francis will have no difficulty in attributing this silence partly to Francis himself. It is quite what one would expect that, seeing the opposition of the cardinals to the indulgence, Francis would not allow any open conflict to arise between the friars and the Curia. He would not have the indulgence cradled in any breach of charity nor in even the appearance of hostility towards the clergy. Just as he would not use the privilege of preaching granted him by the Holy See, when the bishops were opposed to it; so he would not preach the indulgence in the face of their opposition, but would leave it, as he would say, in the care of God Who would make it manifest in His own time. And in fact the official witnesses expressly tell us that Francis did impose this silence at least until his own death. For according to the testimony of Giacomo Coppoli, the friend of Brother Leo, Francis told Leo: "Keep this secret until the day of my death," etc. Cf. Bartholi, *Tract. de Indulgentia*, ed. Sabatier, p. liii.

The silence of the first biographers is therefore no invalidating argument, provided the positive evidence in favour of the indulgence can bear scrutiny. We come then to the attesting evidence.

We may follow M. Paul Sabatier in classifying this evidence into two groups: the official evidence and the popular. (Cf. Bartholi, *Tractatus de Indulgentia*, ed. Sabatier, Introduction, p. xxxviii *seq.*) The first official evidence comes to us from the second half of the thirteenth century. In 1277 Brother Angelo, Minister-Provincial of Umbria, set himself to collect what evidence might still be gathered concerning the granting of the indulgence; and thus he obtained certain written attestations subscribed by a public notary.

There was the evidence of Benedict of Arezzo, who had lived with St. Francis, and who heard the story of the indulgence from Brother Masseo himself who was with St. Francis when the indulgence was granted: also the attestations of a certain Giacomo Coppoli, a citizen of Perugia, who repeated what he had heard from Brother Leo; of Pietro Zalfani, who was present at the promulgation of the indulgence; and of Brother Oddo, and others.

As to what M. Sabatier styles the "popular" witness to the indulgence- that is, its story as handed down on the lips of the people- we have an example in the statement attributed to a "Michaelo Bernardi,

formerly of Spello". According to this statement Michaelo Bernardi heard the story of the indulgence one day when he visited the Porziuncola and found there Peter Cathanii and others of the saints' companions talking amongst themselves about the granting of the indulgence. In this statement we find details which are lacking in the official evidence, and which at first sight are in contradiction with it. Thus in the official evidence it is stated that the Pope was at Perugia when Francis went to him; in the statement of Michaelo Bernardi, Francis goes to Rome to see the Pope. Again, Michaelo Bernardi makes Christ himself fix the second day of August for the gaining of the indulgence; and his narrative is adorned with picturesque details, e.g. of the miraculous roses. Bernardi's statement was incorporated in the diploma of Bishop Conrad of Assisi, published in 1335. M. Sabatier and Père Gratien entirely reject this story as a work of popular imagination creating its own beliefs. Papini (*Storia di San Francesco*, II. p. 242) had already questioned whether Michaelo Bernardi had even existed; but Spader (quoted by Sabatier, op. cit. p. LXXXVIII, note 1), asserts that a Pietro Bernardi was a member of the Cancelleria of Assisi in 1228, and that in 1360 members of the family were still living in Spello.

That Bernardi's statement manifests a love of the marvellous none will deny. But it is not to be put aside too lightly. In some respects it is consistent with known historical facts. It speaks of Francis taking Peter Cathanii to Rome in the month of January. Honorius certainly was in Rome in January, both in 1217 and in 1221. (Cf. Pressutti, *Reg. Hon.* III. pp. 38 and 485); Peter Cathanii did not die till 10 March, 1221. Hence those who accept Bernardi's statement hold that it refers not to the original grant of the indulgence made at Perugia in 1216; but to a second journey undertaken either in January, 1217 or 1221, to get the Pope to determine a definite day for the indulgence, which had not yet been fixed. (Cf. P. Pantilo, *Storia di S. Fran.* I. p. 331.) The Chron. XXIV. Gen. (*Anal. Franc.* III. p. 29) dates the grant of the indulgence in 1221. Wadding follows this date for the original grant, but mentions a second journey in 1223. There may indeed be a substratum of historical truth in Bernardi's recital: but that is the most that can be said for it.

We must now take note of another class of evidence—what one may call the undesigned evidence left by witnesses who had no intention of giving evidence, but who merely mention the indulgence as a matter of

fact. Evidence of this sort is all the more convincing simply because it is unintentional. We have two instances of the kind.

In 1280 the Minister-General Bonagrazia forbade the friars to receive offerings of money in the church of the Porziuncola on the day of the indulgence :[1] and this witness is the more important because Bonagrazia was an opponent of the *Spirituals* and would not have tolerated any doubtful privilege which tended to exalt the Porziuncola over the basilica of San Francesco, which was, so to speak, the camp of the party of *the Community* in the Order. We may take it, therefore, that the indulgence must have been well established by 1280.

The second instance is the statement of Ubertino da Casale in the first prologue to his first book of the *Arbor Vitæ*, to the effect that he himself visited the Porziuncola on 2 August, 1284, or 1285, to gain the indulgence.

In the face of this "undesigned" evidence it is difficult to follow the contention of Dr. Kirsch (*Der Portiuncula Ablass* in *Theol. Quartalschrift*, 1906, 1 and 2) that the indulgence was concocted by the *Spirituals* between 1288 and 1295. Whatever may be said as to the origin of the indulgence, it was clearly drawing pilgrims to the Porziuncola in 1280 and was then a well-established event, and Dr. Kirsch's theory that the indulgence was concocted by the *Spirituals* between 1288 and 1295 falls to the ground.

But what about the "official" evidence? for, of course, the authenticity of the attribution of the indulgence depends chiefly upon that.

Dr. Kirsch and Joh. Joergensen consider the "attestations of 1277" to be a mere forgery penned at or after the time that the *Spirituals*, as they contend, were striving to foist the indulgence upon the conscience of Christendom. They object in the first place that the original document of the attestations has yet to be found : and in the second place they appeal to the internal witness of the attestations themselves for their own condemnation.

Now it is quite true that the original document of the attestations is unknown : but the attestation of Benedict of Arezzo exists in an authentic document of the thirteenth century and in another document the date of which is more uncertain but which nevertheless is not later than the beginning of the fourteenth century.[2] Bishop Theobald refers explicitly

[1] *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 373.

[2] Cf. M. Sabatier : Bartholi, pp. xliv-xlix ; P. Holzapfel in *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. I, p. 38.

to the attestations in his diploma of 1310. The objection on the score of the disappearance of the original document is not one to be pressed too far, else it would reduce all history into a very small compass. What purported to be copies of the attestations were certainly known before the end of the thirteenth century and in the beginning of the fourteenth.

Of greater weight would be any objections established from the internal testimony of the documents themselves.

Of all the attestations three are of first importance, as giving us original details of the story of the indulgence—the attestations of Benedict and Rainerio of Arezzo, of Pietro Zalfani, and of Giacomo Coppoli.

Dr. Kirsch objects to the attestation of Benedict and Rainerio of Arezzo, that they profess to have received the story of the indulgence from Brother Masseo, the companion of St. Francis. Accepting the statement of Wadding that this Brother Masseo died in 1280, Dr. Kirsch asks why Brother Masseo himself was not called as a witness in 1277? Dr. Kirsch ought surely to have known that Wadding's dates are unreliable, and in fact it has been proved that the Masseo who died in 1280 was another religious of that name and not the saint's companion. But Joergensen objects that Benedict of Arezzo was a man given to seeing the marvellous, and therefore altogether unreliable as a witness. He bases this statement upon the biography of the friar written by one, Nannes, in 1302, in which the most extraordinary events are chronicled.[2] But one may well ask how far the description of these marvels is to be attributed to Benedict himself and how far to an imaginative biographer! Authentic accounts of Benedict of Arezzo show him to have been a trusted counsellor in the affairs of the Order. He filled the office of Minister-Provincial for thirty years, from 1217 to 1239. And the account he gives in his attestation is purely matter-of-fact and without any indication of the marvellous.

As to the attestation of Zalfani, Joergensen rejects it on the ground that Zalfani says St. Francis held a paper in his hand when he was announcing the indulgence. "Without doubt," says Joergensen, "in

[1] Cf. P. Lemmens, *Catalogus S. Fratrum Minorum*, p. 6.

[2] Cf. P. Golubovich, *Biblioteca*, I. pp. 129-48; *Acta SS.* Augusti, VI. p. 808-11.

the mind of the old man that paper was the papal bull; though [he adds] they tell us that Francis obstinately refused to accept one." But whatever may have been in the mind of Zalfani, he certainly does not say that it was a papal bull: that is only Joergensen's reading of Zalfani's mind!

Both Kirsch and Joergensen reject the evidence of Giacomo Coppoli on the ground that it contradicts the attestation of Zalfani. In Coppoli's attestation St. Francis, after relating the story of the indulgence to Brother Leo, is said to have told him: "Keep this a secret until the day of my death". But how could Francis have bidden Leo keep the indulgence a secret if it was already promulgated in the presence of seven bishops?

This objection surely strains at mere words. The explanation I have given in the text (p. 195) is perfectly natural, that it was in face of the continued and growing opposition that Francis afterwards inculcated silence on his companions.[1]

In fact the attestations have two strong points in their favour: they are quite simple and matter-of-fact in tone: whilst giving separate supplementary details, they are in no wise contradictory of each other and it may be added, they in no wise contradict the story of St. Francis as it is authentically known to us.

Taking the evidence, then, as it stands, we find that the indulgence was well-established in 1280 and that the "official" attestations bear the marks of credibility.

But there is yet another question to be considered. Would the Holy See have allowed the indulgence to stand if there were not some strong tradition to sanction it? It must be remembered that about 1280 and for some years afterwards there was clamorous opposition to the indulgence on the part of the clergy at large. Moreover inside the Franciscan Order there was the strife between the *Friars of the Community* who regarded the Sagro Convento as the mother-house of the Order, and the *Spirituals* who gave that title to the Porziuncola. In 1288 Pope Nicholas IV granted indulgences for visiting the basilica of the Sacro Convento on its dedication-day. Would he have allowed the Porziuncola indulgence

[1] I pass over the objection raised on the score that according to Coppoli Francis bade Leo keep the secret until his (Leo's) death. It is based on the reading of one of the MSS: "*usque ad mortem meam*". But the MS. of Florence and that of Volterra have: "*usque ad diem mortis meæ*".

to stand without a new and special grant had it been only newly heard of? We know how in 1296 Boniface VIII revoked a similar indulgence granted by his predecessor to the church of Collemaggio; would he have allowed the Porziuncola indulgence to continue in spite of the opposition to it, if there were any doubt that it was already long established and authentic?

The toleration of the indulgence by the Holy See towards the end of the thirteenth century suggests that the indulgence must have been long in existence and that its authenticity was then unquestioned by the highest authority.

In short, the rejection of the authenticity of the indulgence raises questions as difficult to answer as does its acceptance.

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(1) P. Sabatier: *Fr. Bartholi, Tractatus de Indulgentia S. Mariæ de Portiuncula.* Cf. *De testimonio B. Benedicti de Aretio* in *Arch. Franc. Hist.* an. IV. fasc. III.

(2) *Against the authenticity:—*

Dr. Anton Kirsch: *Der Portiunkula-Ablass* in *Theol. Quartalschrift*, 1906, I. and II.; Joh. Joergensen: *Saint François d'Assise*, livre III. chap. III. (Cf. *ibid.* Appendix I, written for the French edition, in which the author modifies his conclusions. In the English translation which has come to hand whilst this book was in the press, I find that Joergensen has re-written his chapter on the indulgence and now admits the authenticity.) Van Ortroy, S.J., in *Anal. Bolland.* XXVI. p. 140.

(3) *For the authenticity:—*

P. Sabatier: *Un nouveau chapitre de la Vie de S. François;* Père Gratien, O.M. Cap. in *Études Franciscaines*, tom. XVIII. p. 478 *seq.* Mgr. Faloci Pulignani: *Gli storici dell' Indulgenza della Porziuncula* in *Misc. Franc.* vol. X. p. 65 *seq.* P. Holzapfel, O.F.M.: *Entstehung des Portiuncula-Ablesses* in *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fas. I. p. 31 *seq.* P. René, O.M. Cap.: *L'Indulgence de la Portiuncula*, in *Études Franciscaines*, tome XX. p. 337 *seq.* Dr. Alf. Fierens: *De geschied Kundige oorsprong van den aflaat van Portiunkula.*

APPENDIX III.

THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER.

The earliest copy of the Rule of the Third Order at present known to us dates only from 30 March, 1228, seven years, that is, after the institution of the Brothers of Penance. This copy was discovered a few years since amongst the documents of the Franciscan friary of Capestrano in the Abruzzi, by Prof. Vincenzo de Bartholomæis and edited by M. Paul Sabatier in *Opuscules de Critique Historique*, tom. I. fasc. I. under the title *Regula Antiqua Fratrum et Sororum de Pœnitentia.*

M. Sabatier does not regard this Capestrano Rule as the original Rule of the Third Order. According to him the first twelve chapters had their origin shortly after the death of St. Francis; and the thirteenth chapter, about 1230.[1] It holds the same relationship, he thinks, to the original Rule of the Penitents as the Rule of 1223 holds to the primitive Rule of the Friars Minor.[2] P. Mandonnet, O.P., on the other hand, holds that the Capestrano Rule, with the exception of the thirteenth chapter, is the original Rule of 1221.[3] Yet again, Boehmer in his collection of the writings of St. Francis, ranks this Rule amongst the "spurious" works;[4] whilst W. Goetz holds that it is a mere mosaic of legislative documents.[5]

To me it seems that the first twelve chapters of the Capestrano Rule[6]

[1] *Regula Antiqua*, pp. 10-11. Another version of this Rule from a MS. in the Royal Library at Königsberg, was published by Father Lemmens, O.F.M., in *Archivum Franc. Hist.* April, 1913.

[2] *ibid.* p. 10, note 2.

[3] *Les Règles et le Gouvernement de l'Ordo de Pœnitentia au XIIIe siècle*—*Opuscules de Critique Hist.* tom. I. fasc. IV.

[4] *Analekten*, p. 73.

[5] *Die Regel des Tertiarierordens*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. XXIII. p. 97 *seq.*

[6] The thirteenth chapter of the Capestrano Rule is manifestly a collection of local statutes added on to the original text. Such statutes would correspond to the decrees of the chapters amongst the Friars Minor, and not unlikely were the actual decrees of chapters held by the Penitents.

are a revision of the original Rule, made shortly after Ugolino's elevation to the Papal throne, and that the revision represents the substitution as the dominant principle in the fraternity, of the prohibition to take the feud-oath in place of the renunciation of superfluous wealth.

From the beginning the prohibition of the feud-oath was a leading idea in the formation of the fraternity, and undoubtedly the prohibition was in accord with the mind of Francis. But whereas Francis thought chiefly of the moral causes of the feud-spirit, namely avarice and secular ambition, and was intent upon developing both love of God and of man by means of evangelical poverty, Ugolino, with a statesman's instinct, looked directly to the legal means by which the feud-spirit might be combated. Ugolino's conception, in other words, was that of a religious corporation protected by the Church in its refusal to undertake the oath and military service, whilst Francis saw in the fraternity a spiritual family bound together in a love of evangelical poverty and in evangelical charity.

In all probability the original Rule approximated more nearly to that of the Humiliati than does the Capestrano Rule, inasmuch as there is reason to believe that it contained the ordinances concerning the distribution of superfluous income and also the admonitions concerning conjugal chastity. As we have seen, the practice of the first Franciscan tertiaries was to distribute the wealth which they did not require for their own modest needs; for Ugolino himself, as Gregory IX, on 30 March, 1228, issued the bull "*Detestanda*," in which he forbade the penitents from being hindered in this practice by the secular authorities.[1] And as regarding the precept concerning conjugal chastity, it is noteworthy that the Penitents were also known as "Continentes," "the continent," which shows that they made a special profession of chastity, even as the Humiliati did.[2]

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 287.

[2] *Ordo Continentium* is a style frequently used in public documents to designate the tertiaries. (Cf. Sbaralea, *Bullar.* I. p. 99, note f.) One of St. Francis' nephews is described as "Picardus Continens"; i.e. Picardo, of the Third Order, is an ancient genealogy given by Ant. Cristofani, in *Delle Storie* [ed. 1802], p. 51. Cf. also Bartholi, *Tract. de Indulgentia* [ed. Sabatier], pp. 70, 86; also *Fioretti*, III. Consid. delle Stim. A religious community of tertiary sisters was existing in Germany in 1233 under the title of "*Virgines Continentes*" (Sbaralea, *ibid.* p. 108). The appellation must have had reference directly to conjugal chastity, considering that it was chiefly for married

It would be interesting were we able to determine precisely the motives which induced Ugolino to delete these regulations from the Rule, supposing them to have really formed part of the original Rule. In the absence of documentary evidence we can only fall back upon conjecture. It is possible that, as the tertiaries increased in numbers and came to take in a very large section of the community, the practice of an annual distribution of superfluous wealth may have tended to produce economic results which in the opinion of the Holy See, as well as of the civic authorities, may have been injurious to the common welfare. It would undoubtedly interfere with the industrial development of the State, and that was a matter of much concern to the Italian communes in the thirteenth century, whose very independence rested upon industrial prosperity. Ugolino therefore may well have considered that on this point the magistrates and governors had a legitimate grievance. It would be different were the tertiaries comparatively few in number: then their action would not greatly affect the State: but in some places the greater part of the citizens became tertiaries and then their withdrawal from industrial enterprise would undoubtedly be a set-back to the commune.

As to the law of conjugal chastity, Ugolino may have considered that the common precept of the Gospel in this matter was sufficient, and that a special precept in the Rule of the Penitents might tend to foster a practice which if it became widespread, would frustrate the very object of Christian marriage. We know that there was a tendency amongst married penitents to bind themselves by mutual agreement to live as brother and sister. Such a practice when confined to the few, doubtless had a good effect upon the community in the way of self-restraint and regard for purity: but if such a practice became general it would lead to obvious moral and social dangers. Moreover in the actual condition of Italy, seeing how the peninsula, especially in the central and northern provinces, was inoculated with the tenets of the Cathari and Patarini, there was a danger lest amongst the common people, the practice of distributing superfluous wealth and of renouncing marriage rights, might develop into the communism and the Manichean view of marriage, preached by the heretics. This danger became imminent since the Third Order was thrown wide open to all Catholics of whatever rank or condition.

persons that the fraternity was instituted: but it not unfrequently happened that married penitents mutually consented to live according to the evangelical council. A case of this sort is mentioned in II Celano, 38.

Such reasons might well have led Ugolino to revise the Rule[1] in the direction of concentrating the corporate purpose of the fraternity upon a matter which could be more directly supervised by the ecclesiastical authorities and which was of vital concern to the papal policy, namely the suppression of the claim of the secular authority to enforce military service in pursuance of civic feuds or against the Church.

On the other hand, the regulations concerning dress, food and the religious exercises of the Penitents found in the Capestrano Rule are probably derived from the original Rule. They are evidently based upon the Rule of the Humiliati.

As to the government of the fraternity, the Capestrano Rule implies that the Penitents are governed by their own ministers,[2] but under the judicial supervision of a visitor whose duty it is to correct abuses and punish delinquents. The visitor has the power to dispense the brethren from particular observances of the Rule in cases of necessity, and also to expel recalcitrant members.[3] It is not said in the Rule that the visitor, shall be a Friar Minor; though one of the additional statutes ordains that "the visitor and ministers of this fraternity shall ask the minister or custos of the Friars Minor for a Friar Minor from the convent, and that this fraternity be governed and ruled by the advice of this friar and by the will of the friars".

Now according to Bernard de Besse the Penitents in the beginning had Friars Minor as their ministers and only later on chose their ministers from their own body.[4] P. Mandonnet argues that the period when the Penitents were under the jurisdiction of Friars Minor as their ministers, was before 1221; and this is indeed one of his grounds for asserting that before that year the friars and the penitents formed one organic fra-

[1] A statement in *Annales Wormatienses* (*Mon. Germ. Script.* tom. XVII. p. 75) merits attention. Under the year 1227 appears this passage: "*Ordo Penitentium eodem anno a papa confirmatur*". If this could be taken as authentic evidence one might suppose that in that year the revision of the Rule was made with a view to a more solemn approbation by the Holy See. But the *Annales Wormatienses* are not always exact. Thus under the year 1208 we find: "*Eodem anno incepit ordo Fratrum Minorum* ET PRÆDICATORUM".

[2] Cf. capp. 7, 8, 10, 12.

[3] Cf. cap. 12.

[4] Cf. *Lib. de Laud.* (*op. cit.* p. 76).

ternity.[1] But this argument is based upon the assumption that the Capestrano Rule is that of 1221. As a matter of fact we have no evidence to show whether the ministers of the Penitents before 1228 were chosen from the friars or from the Penitents themselves, except the evidence of Bernard de Besse.

But the additional statute to the Capestrano Rule to which we have just referred shows that in 1228, although the Penitents had their local ministers chosen from their own body, they were yet "governed and ruled by the advice" of the Friars Minor appointed to advise them, and "by the will of the Friars Minor" corporately. It would seem from this that the Penitents were claiming the right to be under the jurisdiction of the Friars Minor, just as St. Clare was claiming this right for the Poor Ladies, and that this right was admitted at least in practice at the time the statute was made.

In 1234 however the Penitents were placed under the jurisdiction of the bishops "quatenus ad visitationem et correctionem eorum".[2] Nevertheless the Penitents still asserted their claim to be governed by the friars; for St. Bonaventure refused to exercise jurisdiction over them or to be concerned with their government.[3] Yet even as late as 1287 it seems that the ministers of the friars were also at times ministers of the Penitents.[4] In fact it was not until 1290 that the question of government was finally settled. In 1289, Nicholas IV had again revised the Rule of the Penitents[5] and ordained that they should choose ministers from their own body and that the visitor should be any approved religious, not necessarily a Friar Minor. But the Penitents vehemently protested, and in 1290 Nicholas ordained that the visitor must be a Friar Minor.[6] Still, the ministers, both local and provincial, of the Penitents were chosen from

[1] *Les Règles*, p. 178 *seq.*

[2] Vide bull "*Ut cum majori*" of 21 November, 1284. Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 142.

[3] Cf. S. Bonaventure *Determinationes*, pars. ii Quæst. 16. *Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi) VIII. p. 368.

[4] See the letter of John Boccamazzi written to the guardians of the Friars Minor at Strasburg and other places, quoted by Mandonnet, *op. cit.* p. 180, note 2.

[5] Vide Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. pp. 94-7; *Seraph. Legislat. Textus*, pp. 77-96.

[6] Vide bull "*Unigenitus Dei Filius*" of 8 August, 1290 (Sbaralea, *ibid.* pp. 167-8).

amongst themselves :[1] and except for the visitation, were no longer under the effective government of the friars. It is not improbable therefore that Bernard de Besse in stating that the Penitents "in the beginning" were governed by a friar as minister, is referring to a period as late as 1234 when the fraternity of the Penitents was "governed and ruled by the advice" of a Friar Minor and "by the will of the Friars Minor". The question of the government and development of the Third Order is however full of difficulties and yet awaits an exhaustive critical treatment.

[1] Cf. *Gli Statuti di una antica congregatione Francescana di Brescia*, in *Arch. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. IV. pp. 540-68; also, *Acta et Statuta Generalis Capituli Tertii Ordinis . . . Bononiæ celebratæ an. 1289*, in *Arch. Franc. Hist.* an. II. fasc. I. pp. 63-71.

APPENDIX IV.

THE SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE OF ST. FRANCIS.

"There are few 'lives' in history so well documented as that of Saint Francis," wrote M. Paul Sabatier in 1894.[1] With still more truth might the same be said to-day. For during the last seventeen years, a number of documents have been brought to light, some of them of the first importance. One document of primary value, of which all traces had been lost, has been discovered, namely the *Tractatus de Miraculis*, by Thomas of Celano; other documents hidden away in uncatalogued libraries and unknown to students have been recovered, such as the Capestrano Rule of the Third Order, and the treaty of peace between Perugia and Assisi in 1203.

Critical research has moreover shown the existence of early documents which remain only as parts of later compilations, as in the case of the *Speculum Perfectionis*; it has forced students to revise their judgment and acknowledge a greater value in some received works, e.g. the *Fioretti*, and the *Liber Conformitatum* by Bartholomew of Pisa; further it has given recognition to many hitherto neglected works such as Bartholi's *Tractatus de Indulgentia S. M. de Portiuncula*, the *Sacrum Commercium S. Francisci cum Domina Paupertate*; and finally it has resulted in the recovery of more authentic texts of works already published, as e.g. the *Opuscula* of St. Francis, the First and Second Legends of Thomas of Celano, the Legend of St. Clare, the *Anonymus Perusinus*, Eccleston's Chronicle "*De Adventu FF. Minorum in Angliam*".

Every year, almost, has seen the appearance of some new document or text: nor, it would seem, are the recoveries yet exhausted. The legend *Quasi stella* attributed to John of Ceperano has yet to be found; so too is it with the original *rotuli* of Brother Leo, and some letters of St. Francis. We have not yet got a definite text of the *Vita Fratris Aegidii*

[1] *Vie de St. François*, p. xxxiii.

written by Brother Leo. Research is still eager for the original *Fioretti*, and for fuller authentic information concerning St. Francis' pilgrimage in Palestine and his visit to Spain.

Whilst it must be admitted that the discoveries already made have brought to light but few *facts* and *sayings* which have not been in some way recognized in the hitherto accepted story of the saint, nevertheless we are now in a better position to obtain a true historical perception of the saint's character and deeds, and of the purpose and achievement of his life. Mere facts are but the alphabet of authentic history: it is in the right concatenation of facts that we get the authentic word of history. But for this true spelling several conditions are imperative: not only must we know the external circumstances of time and place and association into which the fact or saying is born: we need to know also the character and temperament, the mental atmosphere and moral outlook from which a man's actions and words are derived; and this is generally the more difficult thing to attain to.

Now the results of critical research into the sources of Franciscan history have certainly enabled us to place the facts of St. Francis' life and his words, in a more authentic setting in regard to the external circumstances to which they belong, as well as to judge in many instances with more or less assurance of matters which have given the critics food for debate. But more than that, with the recovery and authentication of many documents, we are able more closely to follow the workings of the saint's mind and of the minds of his associates. The *Speculum Perfectionis* which is largely derived from the saint's own companions, brings one into the very atmosphere which surrounded the saint's later years; whilst the larger assurance with which we can now accept the *Fioretti* and other later compilations substantially increases our power of steady vision.

Curiously enough it seems to me the wider our knowledge of the sources of the Franciscan story becomes, the more accurate appears that traditional estimate of Francis, which has been kept sacred in the people's mind through all the ages since he lived. Biographers who have sought to explain the Francis of the early legends have too frequently succeeded only in distorting the proportions of his life and in writing around the bare facts of his story, a thesis which has but a stranger's claim upon the tolerance of the spirit of the early legends. But popular tradition has been more tenacious of that spirit; and now our fuller knowledge of the early legends is bringing us critically into the company of the popular

tradition; only with a more accurate appreciation of the values of the material out of which the traditional figure has been woven.

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The sources of our knowledge of St. Francis fall into four main divisions:—

(1) The saint's writings;

(2) The documents left by the biographers of the saint and the chroniclers of the Order;

(3) The writings of others who did not professedly deal with the history of the Franciscan Order;

(4) Diplomatic and legal documents.

I.

The Writings of the Saint.

These have been handed down in two sets of codices, representing, as some think, two distinct traditions, Conventual and Observant;[1] the "Conventual" codices are chiefly the Assisi MS. 388, and those contained in the *Fac secundum exemplar* compilations;[2] typical of the "Observant" codices is the Ognissanti MS. The writings as contained in the first set were practically reproduced in the Chronicle of Mariano of Florence, whilst the *Conformities* of Bartholomew of Pisa gives them in the order of the second set. Wadding published in 1623 an edition of the writings,[3] in which he included not only *dicta* of the saint extracted from the legends, and which *in form* are certainly not authentic, but also other matter, such as the canticle, *Amor di Caritate*, which both in substance and form belongs to other authors. From Wadding's time until quite recent years the editors and translators of the "Works of St. Francis" merely reproduced Wadding. But in 1904 the Franciscans of Quaracchi published a new critical edition.[4] In the same year H. Boehmer published his critical study of the *Opuscula*,[5] and W. Goetz republished with

[1] Sabatier: "Les Opuscules de Saint François" in *Opuscules de Critique Hist.* fasc. x. pp. 133-4. Cf. Fr. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., *Writings of St. Francis*, p. xviii.

[2] *Vide infra*, p. 516.

[3] *B. P. Francisci Assisiatis Opuscula.* Portions of the writings had already been printed in the *Speculum Vitæ* and the *Firmamentum trium Ordinum.*

[4] *Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis* (Quaracchi).

[5] *Analekten zur Geschichte des Franciscus von Assisi* (Tübingen).

some emendations his valuable examination of the writings[1] which had already appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*. In 1906 a critical English translation of the *Opuscula* was published by Father Paschal Robinson, O.F.M.[2]

As a result of critical research the following writings are more or less generally accepted as authentic :—

1. The two Rules of the Friars Minor of 1221 and 1223.
2. The Testament.
3. The *Forma Vivendi* inserted in the Rule of St. Clare.
4. The regulations *De religiosa habitatione in eremo* and *De reverentia Corporis Christi.*
5. The Admonitions—*Verba Admonitionis.*
6. The *chartula* given to Brother Leo.
7. Six letters.
8. Some prayers.
9. The Canticle of the Sun.

The authenticity of the *two Rules* of the Friars Minor is unquestioned. Their history is set forth in the body of this book and need not detain us here. Neither is there any doubt in regard to the *Forma Vivendi* inserted in the Rule of the Poor Clares, since we have it on the authority of St. Clare herself that this *Forma* was written for her and the sisters by the saint.[3]

The *Testament* is well authenticated both by Thomas of Celano[4] and the bull "*Quo elongati*" of Gregory IX,[5] as well as by the Leg. 3 Soc.[6] and St. Bonaventure.[7]

[1] *Die Quellen zur Geschichte des hl. Franciscus von Assisi* (Gotha).

[2] *The Writings of St. Francis.* (Philadelphia, U.S.A.) The translation is enriched with many original critical notes, and besides the Latin works contained in the Quaracchi edition, includes the "Canticle of the Sun". Other critical studies of the writings are: *Les Opuscules de Saint François*, by P. Sabatier (a critical examination of the works of the Quaracchi editors, Boehmer and Goetz), and *Les Opuscules de Saint François d'Assise*, by Père Ubald d'Alençon, O.M.Cap.

[3] Cf. *Reg. S. Claræ*, cap. VI.; cf. Fr. Paschal Robinson, *The Rule of St. Clare*, p. 11.

[4] Cf. I. Celano, 17. Vide Joergensen, *Saint François*, Introd. p. xxxi note 2.

[5] Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 68 *seq.* [6] Leg. 3 Soc. 29. [7] *Leg. Maj.* III. 2.

The short document *De religiosa habitatione in eremo*[1] is certainly one of the most precious of Franciscan monuments. It sets forth the manner of life to be lived by the brethren in the small hermitages which were so numerous in the early days of the Order. The exact date of its composition is unknown; but it could hardly have been written after 1219, when the Order began to be organized on more conventional lines.

The exhortation *De reverentia Corporis Christi*[2] was written in the last years of the saint's life. The *Speculum Perfectionis* speaks of a regulation St. Francis wished to insert in the Rule concerning the care the friars should have for the Blessed Sacrament, "and although," it adds, "these things are not written in the Rule because the Ministers did not think it well that the brethren should be obliged to these things by obedience, nevertheless he willed to leave the brethren a record of his intention both in his Testament and in his other writings".[3] We have in this exhortation one of the writings in which the saint thus expressed his will.[4] It is a touching monument of St. Francis' devotion to the Sacrament of the Altar.

The *Admonitions*—*Verba Admonitionis*[5]—are accepted as authentic by all the critics.[6] Joergensen suggests that they were set forth by Francis at the Chapters of Pentecost, and were the first additions made to the primitive Rule. The suggestion is plausible, and might account for the special care and reverence with which they are preserved. Yet there are difficulties in the way of accepting this opinion in regard to the whole series. The Admonition "*Of Perfect and Imperfect Obedience*" (No. 3), for example, bears evidence that it was written after Francis' return from the East, when the troubles in the Order had begun.[7] The same might

[1] *Opuscula*, p. 83; Boehmer, *Analekten*, p. 67.

[2] *Opuscula*, p. 22; Boehmer, loc. cit. p. 62. [3] Cap. 65.

[4] Wadding includes this document amongst the Letters (Letter 13). He adds an opening salutation: *To my reverend masters in Christ, to all bishops*, etc. Sabatier (*Speculum Perf.* p. clxvi) thinks it to be a postscript to the letter "To a certain Minister".

[5] *Opuscula S. P. Francisci* (Quaracchi, pp. 3-12); *The Writings of S. Francis*, translated by Fr. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M. pp. 3-19; Boehmer, *Analekten*, pp. 40-8.

[6] Goetz, *Quellen zur Geschichte des h. Franz von Assisi*, in *Beitr. z. Kirchengesch.* XXII. p. 551; Joergensen loc. cit. p. 324; Van Ortroy, *Anal. Boll.* XXIV. fasc. III. p. 411.

[7] *Vide supra*, p. 375.

be said of the fifth, sixth, and seventh Admonitions.[1] But whatever were the circumstances of their origin, these words of admonition were undoubtedly frequently on the lips of Francis.[2] They were his "Sermon on the Mount".

Of seventeen letters attributed to the saint by Wadding, only six are admitted as indubitably authentic by the Quaracchi editors : namely, the letters "To all the Faithful," "To all the Brethren," "To a certain Minister," "To the Rulers of Peoples," "To all Custodes," and "To Brother Leo".[3] They also admit the substantial authenticity of the well-known letter to St. Anthony, but are doubtful as to its form.[4] Boehmer accepts only five of the Quaracchi letters as beyond any doubt, and puts the letter "To the Rulers," as well as that to St. Anthony amongst the "doubtful writings".[5] Goetz, on the other hand, accepts both letters,[6] but holds the letter "To all Custodes" as doubtful. All three letters are certainly conformable to the style of thought and speech manifested in other authentic writings of the saint; and bear the mark of his personality. Francis seems to have been no niggard in the matter of writing letters : the letters we now have are but a few of those he is known to have written.[7]

The prayers of St. Francis generally received as authentic are the Praises, the Salutations of the Virtues and of the Blessed Virgin, the

[1] I am quoting the numbers given in the Quaracchi edition of the *Opuscula*.

[2] St. Bonaventure quoting from Admonition 20, says : "This word he had continually in his mouth" (*Leg. Maj.* VI. 1). Again he prefaces a saying of St. Francis similar to Admonition 28, thus : "He would often say to his companions such words as these" (*Leg. Maj.* X. 4). In Admonition 5 we have another version of the Parable of Perfect Joy related in the *Fioretti*, cap. VIII. Similar parallels are e.g. Admon. 4 = Regula I. cap. VI. ; Admon. 6 = *Spec. Perfect.* cap. 4. Regula I. cap. XVII ; Admon. 26 = Testament (concerning the honour due to priests) ; I Celano, 62.

[3] *Opuscula*, pp. 87-116. [4] *Opuscula*, p. 179.

[5] *Analekten*, pp. 70-1. [6] *Quellen*, loc. cit. p. 535, and pp. 528-64.

[7] "*Plura scripta tradidit nobis*," says St. Clare in her Testament. Eccleston speaks of a letter written to the friars in France (*De Adventu* ed. Little, p. 40), and of another written to the friars at Bologna (*ibid.*). Letters to Cardinal Ugolino are mentioned in I Celano, 82, and in the Leg. 3 Soc. 67.

Praises of God, and the Office of the Passion. The Quaracchi editors also include a prayer to obtain Divine Love. The *Praises—Laudes*—are a paraphrase of the Our Father in the mediaeval style,[1] together with an extended doxology. This prayer is evidently referred to in the *Speculum Perfectionis*,[2] from which it would seem that the Praises were frequently recited by St. Francis and the brethren. It is not unlikely that it was this prayer which the saint ordered the brethren in France to recite.[3]

The "Salutation of the Blessed Virgin" and the "Salutation of the Virtues" form one prayer of praise in some of the ancient MSS; though in others they are disjoined.[4] Thomas of Celano textually quotes the "Salutation of the Virtues".[5] If we may take it, as the rubric in certain codices describe it, namely as a praise "of the virtues with which the Blessed Virgin was adorned and which should adorn the holy soul," the salutation is another instance of St. Francis' habit of looking for a concrete embodiment of his ideals. For him the merely abstract had no attraction except as it was realized in some living reality to which he could give his heart. The *Praises of God* is the prayer of praise written by the saint on Mount Alvernia after he had received the stigmata.[6]

An *Office of the Passion* is mentioned in the Legend of St. Clare, as having been composed by St. Francis; and the Quaracchi editors consider that the office given in several ancient MSS. is that referred to. Boehmer altogether omits it from his collection. Yet it bears a striking similarity of construction to the *Laudes Dei*, the "Praises of God". The psalms, so styled, are a string of passages gathered from various psalms and other parts of Scripture, illustrative of a single idea or motive. For example: the ordinary "psalm" for prime is a song of trust in God's mercy; the Easter matins "psalm" is a canticle of joy in the mystery of the Resurrection. The Christmas vespers "psalm" is

[1] Compare the paraphrases of the *Kyrie*, in mediaeval liturgy.

[2] Cap. 82. Cf. Sabatier, *Opuscules*, fasc. x. p. 137. Boehmer, however, classes the paraphrase of the Our Father amongst the "doubtful" writings.

[3] Eccleston, loc. cit.

[4] Cf. Boehmer, *Analekten*, pp. vi and xxviii; Sabatier, *Opuscules de Saint François*, in *Opuscules de Critique Hist.* fasc. x. p. 134; Fr. Paschal Robinson, *Writings of St. Francis*, pp. xx and xxi.

[5] II Celano, 189. [6] *Vide infra*, p. 411.

however a gem of the purest Franciscan water, and hardly anyone but Francis could have written it.[1]

All the above-mentioned writings are in Latin, but a number of poems in the Italian tongue have been attributed to the saint. Of these, however, only one is admitted as authentic, the "Canticle of the Sun".[2] The poems "Amor di caritate" included in the works of St. Francis by Wadding are of later origin, perhaps by Jacopone da Todi. None of the saint's songs in the French tongue have come down to us.[3]

The authentic writings of the saint which have come down to us therefore do not make a bulky volume; yet they are sufficient to give us a true insight into the character of his mind and heart. They reveal to us a poet rather than a philosopher, an apostle rather than a statesman. They utter the intuitive knowledge of the heart and the heart's desire; they are never the evenly-balanced productions of the logical thinker. Yet they give in brief, compendious fashion, a very complete teaching of the spiritual life as we find it set forth in lives of the first Franciscans recorded in the early legends. And for this reason the writings taken in connexion with the legends, are a source of primary importance for our knowledge of the first Franciscan days.

II.

The Early Legends and Chronicles of the Order.

These documents may be divided into four main divisions:—

1. The official biographies;
2. The writings of the saint's companions;
3. The later compilations;
4. The chronicles dealing professedly with the history of the Order rather than with the life of the saint.

1. *The Official Biographies.*

When in 1228 Gregory IX canonized St. Francis, he commanded

[1] *Vide Opuscula*, p. 147; Fr. Paschal Robinson, loc. cit. p. 175. Cf. Sabatier, *Les Opuscules*, 159-60.

[2] The Quaracchi *Opuscula* does not include this canticle, the editors strangely enough confining their edition to the Latin works.

[3] "*Alta et clara voce laudes gallice cantans*," Leg. 3 Soc. 33. "*Gallice cantabat de Domino*," II Celano, 127.

Brother Thomas of Celano to write the Life of the Saint.[1] Brother Thomas undertook the work and produced his *Legenda Prima*, sometimes styled *Legenda Gregoriana* in compliment to the Pontiff who ordered it to be written. It was evidently finished before 25 May, 1230, since it contains no reference to the translation of the body of St. Francis.[2]

The author tells us in the prologue that he has sought to narrate with devotion and truth—"veritate semper prævia et magistra"—what he himself had heard from the lips of St. Francis, or what he had heard from truthful and approved witnesses. He divides his book into three parts, "lest the difference of times might bring confusion into the order of the incidents and so lead to doubt of their truth". The first part is above all devoted to the sincerity of the saint's conversion and life, to his holy conduct and godly examples, together with a few miracles wrought by him during his lifetime. The second part concerns the last two years of the saint's life and his death. The third part relates certain selected miracles worked after death. Reference is also made to the honour shown to Francis by Pope Gregory in inscribing his name in the roll of the saints. The miracles contained in the third part, it should be noted, are those which are "read out and announced to the people in the presence of the Pope,"[3] evidently the miracles attested in the acts of canonization. We must not, however, be misled by Brother Thomas' anxiety not to confuse the order of events. The events contained in the first part happened before the last two years of the saint's life: and the more prominent events in this part are placed undoubtedly in chronological order. But we must not look for the same careful order in the less prominent events,

[1] The *Legenda Prima* was first published by the Bollandists, *Acta SS.* die 4 Octobris. The *Legenda Prima* and *Legenda Secunda* were published by Rinaldi in 1806; in 1880 Amoni republished Rinaldi's edition. A definite edition of both legends was published by P. Edouard d'Alençon in 1906 (Rome, Desclée). This last edition was preceded in 1904 by Dr. Rosedale's unfortunate edition in which a great deal of labour seems to have been wasted through undue hurry.

[2] The Paris Codex says the *Legenda Prima* was presented to the Pope at Perugia on 25 February, 1229. (Cf. Ed. d'Alençon, op. cit. p. xxvi). Tilemann (*Speculum Perfectionis und Leg. Trium Sociorum*) throws doubt upon this ascription. On 21 February, 1229, Gregory IX published a letter concerning the saint's canonization. (Sbaralea, *Bull.* I. p. 49.)

[3] *Vide* Incipit to pars III.

which are often grouped together to set forth some trait in the saint's character.

It has been said of the *Legenda Prima* that it was a manifesto in favour of Elias as against the party in the Franciscan Order which held by the primitive traditions.[1] In proof of this accusation, attention is drawn to the fact that Brother Thomas never once mentions by name the faithful companions of the saint, Leo, Ruffino, Angelo, etc., whereas he goes out of his way to set forth the claims of Elias to the respect of the Order, with the purpose, it is said, of securing his election to the office of General.[2] The argument proves too much—more, that is to say, than we are warranted in concluding from the writings of Celano and our knowledge of him. Thomas was undoubtedly something of a courtier, so far at least as it came naturally to him to do homage to those whom he could put on pedestals. But it was an honest courtiership, not inconsistent with truth and sincerity. I should say that in his earlier years Thomas was apt to form his opinion of men by the place they held in the opinion of the world around him. He writes of St. Clare and her religious sisters[3] with a fervent admiration which must have put their humility to the blush when they read his book: but then all Italy was in open admiration of their wonderful virtue. His naïve adulation of Gregory IX is touching in its manifest sincerity: he is praising the protector of the Order, the friend of St. Francis and the brethren, as well as the Pope.[4] In similar fashion and with similar motive he speaks openly of Elias. Thomas of Celano is evidently impressed by the fact that Elias is the Vicar-General of the Order: and his reverence for the Vicar-General was in all probability heightened by the commanding position Elias held in the eyes of the Papal Court and, in fact, of all who came in contact with him. Few people escaped the fascination of that strange personality: "he was a man

[1] Sabatier, *Vie de S. François*, p. liv. Cf. *Spec. Perfect.* XCVIII-CIX.

[2] Elias is mentioned by name eight times in the course of the legend. It must be said that M. Sabatier does not impute bad faith and conscious conspiracy to Thomas of Celano but regards him rather as a blind complaisant tool in the hands of Elias.

[3] I Celano, 18-20. [4] Cf. I Celano, 20, 74, 99-101, 121-2.

[5] e.g. Several years later St. Clare wrote to Agnes of Prague: "I urge you to follow the counsels of our most reverend Father, Brother Elias, Minister General of the whole Order, and put them before all other counsels given you to follow, and value them as more precious than any other gift" (Epist. II. *vide Acta SS.*, Martii, vol. I. p. 505).

to be reckoned with, whatever office he held. But if Brother Thomas was outspoken in his praise of those in high position, he was not less generous to those who were more lowly in the world's eyes. In all his references to Elias he gives no such encomium of his personal virtue apart from his devotion to St. Francis, as he does of that of the four faithful companions of the saint—Angelo, Ruffino, Leo, and Masseo.[1] He does not indeed mention them by name, as he doubtless would have done had they been Vicars-General or men in authority, but nobody who knew them could mistake whom he was describing; certainly not Elias himself. Their virtues are announced in much the same fervent style as are those of St. Clare and her sisters.

It is, however, quite evident that Thomas of Celano, when he wrote his *Legenda Prima*, was of opinion that Elias had been a faithful friend to St. Francis and had fulfilled the office of Vicar-General with true merit: nor is it unlikely that he went out of his way to praise Elias because of the opposition which he knew there was against him on the part of many of the friars. But Thomas with his generous disposition to distribute praise wherever he considered praise was due, would in such case only deem that he was accepting "the leadership and governance of truth"—"*veritate semper praevia et magistra*": and this he would hold was the more imperative in regard to a man of such outstanding genius. It does not prove that he was in any narrow sense of the word a partisan of Elias as against his opponents. It is likely too that in writing the *Legenda Prima* he was brought into immediate relations with Elias in the matter of the saint's canonization and glorification. To Elias was committed the work of building the saints' shrine; to Thomas, the work of setting forth the saint's claim to canonization—for that was what the *Legenda Prima* was designed to be by Gregory IX. From Elias he would naturally seek information regarding the saint's life. Is it surprising that under the circumstances Elias figures prominently in the narrative?

Another fault found with the *Legenda Prima* is that it avoids all reference to the difficulties which arose between St. Francis and some of the friars and that it does not set forth the intentions of the saint regarding poverty and the life of the Order, such as we find in the *Legenda Secunda* and other documents. But the *Legenda Prima* was written not for the brethren of the Order but for the Catholic world: its purpose was to draw the veneration of Catholics in general towards the newly canonized founder

[1] I Celano, 102.

of the Order. The scope of the work was thus narrowed to one of general edification, and any reference to the internal politics of the Order would have been considered out of place. The *Legenda Secunda* was written by command of the General of the Order, and was designed for the benefit of the friars; but the *Legenda Prima* was written by order of the Pope to announce the claim of St. Francis upon the devotion of the Catholic world at large. Brother Thomas did not profess to give a full account of the saint's life: twice he warns his readers that his story is incomplete.[1]

We have, therefore, no reason to doubt the sincerity and truthfulness of the *Legenda Prima;* although to complete the authentic history of the saint we must have recourse to other documents. It is in fact the foundation upon which our critical knowledge of St. Francis must be built up.[2]

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Celano's *Legenda Secunda* at once brings us into difficulties. It was written by command of the Minister-General Crescentius and was finished before 1247, when Crescentius ceased to be General. The command came about in this way. At the General Chapter of 1244 it was decreed that the brethren who had any personal knowledge of St. Francis should commit their recollections to writing and so forward them to the Minister-General. Chief amongst those who obeyed the decree were the three companions of the saint, Leo, Angelo, and Ruffino: but others also sent in their writings. Having thus collected material, Crescentius committed to Thomas of Celano the task of writing a second legend.[3]

The new legend was written in two books. The first book is a record of facts concerning the conversion of St. Francis which had not come to the knowledge of the author when he wrote the *Legenda Prima*, together with a few incidents of the saint's later life. In the second book the author purposes to set forth the desire and intention of the holy founder in regard both to himself and the brethren.[4]

Now several things are to be noted in regard to this legend, which how-

[1] I Celano, *Prologus*, 88.

[2] Cf. Goetz, loc. cit. p. 166; Joergensen, op. cit. p. xxxiv; Thode, op. cit. p. 277.

[3] *Vide* II Celano, *Prologus;* cf. Salimbene, loc. cit. p. 176. Bernard a Bessa, *Catalogus Gen. Minist.* no. 5; *Chron. Jordani a Jano* in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 8; Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 261.

[4] Cf. II Celano, *Prologus*, 2.

ever we shall consider more fully later on when dealing with the writings of the saint's companions. There is in the first place an obvious difference of style in the composition of the two books of the legend. The first book is written in the style of a biography, just as the *Legenda Prima* was written: whilst the second book is a collection of stories grouped together to illustrate different virtues or doctrines of the saint.

Again, whereas in the *Legenda Prima* the author refers to himself as solely responsible for his work, in the *Legenda Secunda* he associates himself with others,[1] evidently with those whose writings furnished him with the materials out of which his legend is composed: but he speaks of them as co-authors with himself; nay, in regard to the second book, they take the place of the principal authors, whilst Celano himself is hardly more than the scribe or editor.[2]

Yet another trait to be remarked is that the *Legenda Secunda*, especially in the second book, bears traces of the difficulties through which the Order had passed. Time and again, the author presses home the example of the saint and his expressed will, to rebuke those friars who had left the straight road of poverty and simplicity. And in reference to this it must be recalled that Crescentius, the Minister-General, to whom the legend is dedicated, did not favour the party of the strict observance as did his successor, John of Parma; he was rather of the "legal" party as was St. Bonaventure—the "moderate" party as some might call them.[3] The publication of the second book of the *Legenda Secunda* is to

[1] e.g. I Celano, *Prologus*, = *audivi, patui, ejus merear esse discipulus*, etc.; II Celano, *Prologus*, = *concurrimus, percutimur, sumeremus, oramus ergo*, etc.

[2] *Vide Oratio sociorum sancti* with which the second book of II Celano concludes.

[3] Crescentius was in fact a determined opponent of the extreme zelators. Cf. *Anal. Franc.* III p. 263. On the other hand, he seems to have favoured John of Parma whom he sent as his representative to the Council of Lyons in 1245. Cf. Salimbene, loc. cit. p. 176. From this it would seem that Crescentius was not the partisan that Sabatier represents him to be. In his Introduction to the *Speculum Perfectionis*, Sabatier has been led by a misreading of the *Chronicle of the XXIV Generals* to a severe condemnation of Crescentius on the ground that he suppressed the second book of the *Legenda Secunda* or forbade it to be written. At the time of the publication of the *Speculum Perfectionis*, Celano's *Tractatus de Miraculis* had not been

be remembered in estimating the views and attitude of the various parties in the Order concerning the primitive observance. And that is all we need say at this point about this legend, except to call attention to what Celano says in his prologue concerning the miracles of the saint. "Certain miracles are inserted," he says, "as the opportunity of placing them occurred." The miracles are evidently not a first consideration in this legend. One remembers how Brother Thomas excuses himself in the *Legenda Prima* for not relating more miracles: "we have determined to set forth rather the excellence of his life and the upright manner of his conduct, since miracles do not make sanctity but only manifest it".[1]

The same purpose animates him in the *Legenda Secunda*. But others of the friars were more anxious to preserve these proofs of the sanctity of their holy founder: hence John of Parma, on assuming the office of General in succession to Crescentius, repeatedly urged Thomas of Celano to complete his legends by a work on the saint's miracles. So the trusted biographer again took up his pen and wrote the *Tractatus de Miraculis*. The exact date when this treatise was written is unknown, but it was completed whilst John of Parma was General, that is before his resignation in 1247.[2] Apart from the miracles, the treatise records several incidents in the saint's life, not given in the legends; notably the visit of the Lady Giacoma di Settisoli to Francis on his deathbed.[3]

The publication of the *Legenda Secunda* and of the writings of the companions of the saint, undoubtedly furnished the party of the strict

discovered. It is now certain that it was this *Tractatus* which is spoken of as the "second part" of the *Legenda Secunda* by the author of the Chron. XXIV. Gen. (*Anal. Franc.* III. p. 276). *Vide infra.*

[1] I Celano, 70.

[2] Cf. Chron. XXIV. Gen. in *Anal. Franc.* III. p. 276. Perhaps if we knew the date of the Chapter of Genoa held under John of Parma to which Eccleston makes reference—we should be able to form a more exact conclusion. At that chapter, Eccleston tells us, John of Parma ordered Brother Bonizzo, one of the saint's companions, to relate before the brethren the truth of the stigmata, which many people were calling in question (*De Adventu*, ed. Little, p. 93). It is noteworthy that the *Tractatus de Miraculis* devotes a long chapter to the miracle of the stigmata, written with an evident purpose of convincing the unbelievers (cf. *ibid.* 5, "*Nulli sit ambiguitati locus*," etc.).

[3] Concerning the authenticity of the *Tractatus* cf. Van Ortroy, *Anal. Boll.* XVIII. pp. 81-93.

observance in the Order with a weapon they would not be slow to use. Here, they would say, we have evidence of the intentions and mind of St. Francis. Under John of Parma this party flourished, but their opponents were not silenced: partisan spirit ran high on both sides. St. Bonaventure, on succeeding John of Parma, sought to bring about a pacification of the opposing elements. Whatever criticism one may pass upon the policy with which he endeavoured to compass this purpose, the purpose itself can only be judged necessary and godly. In pursuance of this policy, then, he undertook, at the instance of the General Chapter, held at Narbonne in 1260, to write a new biography of St. Francis which the brethren might read without incitement to controversy. To fit himself for this work Bonaventure made new inquiries amongst the brethren yet living, who had known the saint: but it shows the completeness with which Thomas of Celano had accomplished his task as biographer, that as a result of this inquiry, the new biography adds but few details not recorded in Celano's work. On the other hand, it omits much that Celano has given us.

As a book of devotion and a stimulus to religious fervour there are few biographies to compete with St. Bonaventure's *Legend of St. Francis*:[1] it is in truth the life of a saint written by a saint. Historically it leaves much to be desired. The *Legenda Major*—as this legend is generally styled—is not primarily a history but a book of edification. Such incidents as it relates are undoubtedly authentic. For the most part St. Bonaventure seems to have availed himself of the works of Thomas of Celano, notwithstanding his own independent inquiries.[2] The fault of the book, from the historian's point of view, is in its omissions. Consequently the figure of St. Francis, impressed upon our mental retina after reading the *Legenda Major*, falls short in many ways of the impression we receive from the work of Celano. Bonaventure's St. Francis is emphatically a cloistered monk, notwithstanding his missionary excursions; Celano's St. Francis embraces the whole world in his vast spiritual freedom and sympathy. Having completed his *Legenda Major*,

[1] A dominican edition of this legend was published by the Quaracchi editors in the Opera Omnia of St. Bonaventure, tom. VIII. It has also been published separately in a volume with the *Legenda Minor* (see infra) under the title: *S. Bonaventurae Legenda S. Francisci Assisiensis* (Quaracchi, 1898).

[2] Cf. Van Ortroy, *Anal. Boll.* XVIII. pp. 95-7.

St. Bonaventure wrote his *Legenda Minor* for the use of the friars in choir. Several liturgical legends already existed, compiled chiefly from the *Legenda Prima* of Celano.[1]

We come now to an important event in the history of Franciscan documents.

In 1266 the General Chapter held at Paris decreed that all the earlier legends should be proscribed and as far as possible destroyed, and that St. Bonaventure's legend alone should in future be read. Not all the copies of the earlier legends, however, were destroyed; in spite of the capitular decree some few copies remained in the hands of those who championed the more primitive observance: but for the most part they ceased to exist: "it took just 632 years to recover all the scattered fragments of Celano's legends".[2]

[1] e.g. The legend published by Ed. d'Alençon in his edition of Celano's legends (pp. 435-45).

Other legends compiled chiefly from the *Legenda Prima* of Celano are:

(1) The legend of Julian of Speyer, edited by Van Ortroy in *Analecta Bollardiana*, XXI. pp. 148-202. Cf. *Acta SS.* Octob. II. p. 548 *seq.*; *Anal. Boll.* XIX. p. 321 *seq.*

(2) The legend *Quasi stella*, of which, however, we have only a choir version, the original being lost. Cf. Ed. d'Alençon, in *Anal. Ord. F.M. Cap.* vol. XIV. pp. 370-3.

(3) *Vita Brevis, auctore Bartholomæo Tridentino*, in *Anal. Ord. F.M. Cap.* vol. XIII. pp. 248-50.

(4) *Vita Metrica*, written about 1230: sometimes, but erroneously, attributed to John of Kent. It was edited from the MSS. in the municipal library of Assisi by A. Cristofani: *Il più antico poema della vita di S. Francesco* (Prato, 1882).

[2] Fr. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., *A Short Introduction to Franciscan Literature*, pp. 10-11. [I take this opportunity of recommending this excellent booklet to those who want a brief but sure indication of Franciscan sources.] The decree was published by Rinaldi in his edition of Celano's legends p. 11.) See also Ehrle, *Archiv*, p. 39; *English Historical Review*, XIII. pp. 704-8. Van Ortroy discovered another copy in the Vatican library. Cf. *Anal. Boll.* XVIII. p. 174. The learned Jesuit critic does not believe in the "draconian severity" of the decree and thinks it referred merely to the liturgical legends. But in the first place the wording of the decree precludes this limitation, since it orders that any copies found *outside the Order* shall if possible be destroyed. Surely the purpose of the decree must have been

So ends the history of the early legends written by authority: and yet it is not the end, as we shall see.

But before passing on to the next set of documents, we may mention here the *Legenda Stæ. Claræ*.[1] It is now generally attributed to Thomas of Celano[2] and was probably written, like Celano's *Legenda Prima*, as an official biography consequent upon the saint's canonization.[3]

2. *The Writings of the Saint's Companions.*

We have already seen how in response to the command of the General Chapter of 1244, amongst others the three companions of St. Francis, Leo, Angelo, and Ruffino sent their recollections in writing to the Minister-General Crescentius. These writings of the three companions play an important part in the history of Franciscan documents and have been and still are the subject of much controversy.

That the saint's companions did actually send writings to the Minister-General is undoubted. Apart from the prefatory letter to the traditional "Legend by the Three Companions," we have the testimony of the *Legenda Secunda*. The dispute is as to the character of the writings and their subsequent history. M. Sabatier and others hold that these docu-

more serious than merely substituting one office by another. Cf. Lemmens, *Documenta antiqua*, II. p. 11. Moreover, the fact remains that for centuries the earlier legends were practically lost sight of. Cf. also the *Hist. VII Tribulationum* (Ehrle, *Archiv*, II. p. 265): "*quæ scripte erant in legenda prima, nova edita a fratre Bonaventura, deleta et destructa sunt ipso jubente*". It seems, however, that the *Legenda Prima* of Celano, and its dependent biographies, were not rigorously included in this decree, since Bernard of Besse mentions them in his *Liber de Laudibus*. Perhaps this was owing to the fact that the *Legenda Prima* was written by Papal authority.

[1] It was first published in 1573 by Surius in *De probatis SS. vitis*, tom. IV. Another edition was given by the Bollandists, *Acta SS.*, sub die 12 Augusti. A definitive edition has lately been published by Prof. Pennacchi, based on the Assisi MS. 338. An English translation from the same MS. was made by Fr. Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., in 1910, *The Life of St. Clare*. Cf. Mrs. Balfour, *The Life and Legend of the Lady St. Clare* (London, Longmans, 1910).

[2] Cf. Fr. Paschal Robinson, loc. cit. p. xxii.-xxviii; Ed. d'Alençon, *S. Francisci Assis.* p. xlvi.; Sabatier, *Spec. Perfec.* p. lxxv; Van Ortroy, in *Anal. Boll.* XXII. p. 360.

[3] Cf. Fr. Paschal Robinson, loc. cit. p. xxix.

ments are nothing else than the traditional "Legend of the Three Companions". Others again deny this and assert that the documents must be sought elsewhere, for instance in Celano's *Legenda Secunda* or in the *Speculum Perfectionis*. The more probable opinion, it seems to me, is that the writings of the three companions—so far as they exist at all in authentic form—are to be found in the *Speculum Perfectionis*, and in less authentic form in the second book of the *Legenda Secunda*. At the same time we cannot say that either of these documents contains all that the three companions sent to Crescentius. The traditional "Legend of the Three Companions," on the other hand, is not the work of the companions, but was written by an unknown author either before or shortly after the publication of Celano's *Legenda Secunda*. It may be based partly on the writings of the companions, but this is not in any way certain.

At the outset it is to be noticed that the traditional "Legend of the Three Companions," *Legenda 3 Soc.* as we shall henceforth write it, corresponds very closely with the first book of the *Legenda Secunda*. It is inconceivable that this correspondence is accidental: and for this reason amongst others, it seems to me that the *Legenda 3 Soc.* in the form it has come down to us, is the author's complete work, excepting only the prologue or preface,[1] and the additional chapter on the Porziuncola indulgence which is quite evidently a later addition. At the same time we may note the close correspondence between the *Speculum Perfectionis* and the second book of the *Legenda Secunda*.

[1] Concerning the question of the integrity of the legend, cf.: For the integrity: Faloci-Pulignani, in *Miscellanea Franciscana*, tom. VII. p. 81 *seq.*; S. Minocchi, *La Legenda trium Soc.: Nouvi studi*. Against the integrity. PP. Marcellino de Civezza et Teofilo Domenichelli: *La Leggenda di San Francesco scritta de tre suoi compagni*; Sabatier, *De l'authenticité de la légende de S. François, dite des Trois compagnons*; *Description du Speculum Vitæ* in *Opuscules de Critique Hist.* I. fasc. 6; Van Ortroy, *La légende de S. François*, in *Anal. Boll.* XIX, p. 119 *seq.*; Ed. d'Alençon, *La Légende de S. François dite Légende des trois Compagnons*; Tilemann, *Speculum Perfectionis und Legenda Trium Sociorum*. I may call attention here to the unconvincing reconstruction of the legend by P. Marcellino da Civezza and P. Teofilo Domenichelli (op. cit.). To me it seems that the Italian version upon which the reconstruction is built up, is merely an attempt to complete the traditional legend by some translator desirous of producing a full biography from ancient sources.

Are we then to conclude that the *Legenda 3 Soc.* and the *Spec. Perfect.* are compiled mainly from the *Legenda Secunda?* Or may it be that all three works are compiled from another identical source, namely the writings sent by the three companions *and others* to the Minister-General Crescentius? No other alternative is admissible in view of the self-revelation of the *Legenda Secunda* as to its own authorship. We know of a certainity that this legend is based upon these writings.

Now the first thing to consider in the *Legenda 3 Soc.* is the prefatory letter which purports to be written by the three companions, Leo, Angelo, and Ruffino. It tells us that in obedience to the decree of the last Chapter [i.e. of 1244] they have thought it well to acquaint the Minister-General of some of the deeds of St. Francis of which they had personal knowledge, or which they had learned from other holy friars. The letter is dated: Greccio. 15 August, 1246. The curious thing about this letter is the following passage: "*per modum legendæ non scribimus cum dudum de vita sua* [S. Francisci] *et miraculis quæ per eum Dominus operatus est, sint confectæ legendæ.*[1] *Sed velut de ameno prato quosdam flores arbitrio nostro pulchriores excerpimus, continuatam historiam non sequentes, sed multa seriose relinquentes, quæ in prædictis legendis sunt posita tam veridico quam luculento sermone.*"

But the *Legenda 3 Soc.*, contrariwise, is certainly written in the manner of a legend; and the first sixteen chapters, at any rate, are a "continuous history". Consequently it is difficult to believe that the prefatory letter and the body of the legend are one original work. In nearly all the ancient MSS., however, the *Legenda 3 Soc.* is followed by chapters from the *Speculum Perfectionis;* and if, as I believe, this compilation contains many of the original writings of the companions, it is easy to account for the presence of the letter at the beginning of the MSS.

We have spoken of the close correspondence between this legend and the first book of the *Legenda Secunda:* but there are notable differences both in style and matter. The writer of the *Legenda 3 Soc.* was not a literary stylist as was Thomas of Celano. He writes freely and with imagination, but his words and phrases are homely, without any marks of the scholar. As to the matter, the *Legenda 3 Soc.* includes incidents

[1] i.e. the *Legenda Prima* and the legend of Julian of Speyer. The wording of the letter shows an acquaintance with the *Legenda Prima*, e.g. the phrase *peritate præcia* (cf. I Celano, *Prologus*): "*Miracula quæ sanctitatem non vaciunt sed ostendunt* (cf. I Celano, 70).

which find no place in any of Thomas of Celano's writings, e.g. the first missionary journey of St. Francis and Brother Giles in the Marches of Ancona; the intervention and death of Cardinal John of St. Paul; the adventure of Brother Bernard at Florence; the sending of the friars to Germany and Hungary. Even in relating the same incidents as Celano, the *Legenda 3 Soc.* frequently adds intimate details; e.g. both legends relate the conversation between St. Francis and Bernard da Quintavalle, which preceded the latter's "conversion"; but it is the *Legenda 3 Soc.* which tells us that Bernard approached Francis secretly and invited him to spend a night in his house. So, too, both legends give the parable of the fisherman, but the *Legenda 3 Soc.* alone mentions that it was spoken to Brother Giles. Such instances might be multiplied.

Hence it is evident that even if the author of the *Legenda 3 Soc.* made use of the *Legenda Secunda,* he nevertheless had before his eyes other documents. As to what these documents were, three suppositions are possible: they may have been the original documents of the witnesses, including the three companions, who sent their written attestations to the General Crescentius; or they may have been other documents written from time to time by those who wished to preserve evidences of St. Francis' life, similar to those collected about 1270 concerning the Porziuncola indulgence (*vide supra*, pp. 407 *seq.*); or they may have been documents of a later period and of less authentic character.

This third supposition, however, seems the least tenable. For if the *Legenda 3 Soc.* were, as Van Ortroy and others assert, a later legend of the fourteenth century, how is it that it contains no reference to the Porziuncola indulgence?[1] The omission of any such reference indicates to my mind that the *Legenda 3 Soc.* was not written after the indulgence had become widely published.

As I have said, the close correspondence of this legend with the first book of the *Legenda Secunda* proves either that Celano deliberately took the *Legenda 3 Soc.* as his model, or that the author of the *Legenda 3 Soc.* deliberately shaped his legend upon the first book of the *Legenda Secunda.* I confess that I cannot determine to my own satisfaction which of these alternatives is the more probable. If we had any definite indication as to the actual witnesses, other than the three companions, who sent in their writings to the General Crescentius, we might be able to solve, with more

[1] As before mentioned the chapter on the indulgence is evidently a later addition.

or less certainty, this troublesome problem. As it is, I can but note the following conclusions :—

1. On the supposition that the author of the *Legenda 3 Soc.* worked over the writings of Celano, he did so not as a mere revisionist but with the intention of writing a new legend, embracing details which Celano had omitted ; and for this purpose he used other documents, including the legends prior to the *Legenda Secunda.*[1]

2. He may however, whilst following the ground-plan of Celano's work, have compiled from the original documents which Celano made use of ; and the instances of verbal correspondence between the two legends may be due to the fact that both were taken from the same source. This is more probable ; for the style of the *Legenda 3 Soc.* almost precludes the conclusion that the author was quoting directly from Celano : so far M. Sabatier's *Critique* of the *Legenda 3 Soc.* seems to me conclusive.[2]

3. Whoever the writer was, he was not of the militant party of the strict observance, though his sympathies were eminently drawn to the primitive ideal. There is in the style a clear detachment from the restlessness and agitation of the militant partisan. He can speak with a certain pride of the grand basilica built in honour of St. Francis even as he takes a pride in the poverty of the saint and the first brethren.

4. The legend was not written much later than 1270, since it does not mention the Porziuncola indulgence.

5. The writings of the companions may have contributed matter to the *Legenda 3 Soc.* ; but in any case they are not the sole source of the legend.[3]

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The case is different when we come to the *Speculum Perfectionis.* Here we undoubtedly have some, if not all, of the documents written by the three companions.

If we compare the *Speculum Perfectionis* with the second book of the *Legenda Secunda*, it is at once evident that the two works are in the main closely related in both matter and form : and a study of the two docu-

[1] For instance cap. XVIII. seems to show an acquaintance with the legend of Julian of Speyer.

[2] *De l'authenticité de la Légende de Saint François dite des Trois Compagnons* (Paris, 1901).

[3] Besides the authors already cited, cf. A. Fierens, *La Question Franciscaine* in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclesiastique*, 15 Avril, 1906.

ments makes it clear that in the *Spec. Perfect.* we have original writings which Celano edited and somewhat refashioned.[1]

It has yet to be determined how far the original *Spec. Perfect.* is the work of the three companions, and whether the compilation which first bore that name was exclusively their work. What is certain is that the edition published by M. Sabatier in 1898 is a compilation containing other writings besides the work of the companions. It is one of the numerous compilations which came into existence about the beginning of the fourteenth century.[2] The earliest MSS. which contains the *Spec. Perfect.* as edited by M. Sabatier, have the date 1318. Fr. Lemmens, O.F.M., has however published what he considers an earlier and more authentic version which differs from that of M. Sabatier in both matter and arrangement. It is a much shorter document; and unlike the other versions, the incidents it records are not grouped together in the manner of II Celano, II The probability is that it is a late compilation; and that the Sabatier compilation is the more authentic.[3] The difficulty, however, remains how to distinguish between what belongs to the companions and what to other writers in M. Sabatier's edition. One may say at once that the passages corresponding with Celano's book are *substantially* authentic. Such passages occur in eighty-six chapters of the *Spec. Perfect.* But even in these we cannot say that we have always the original text of the companions, though for the most part the evidence favours the *Spec. Perfect.* as against Celano.[4] But besides the passages corresponding with the *Legenda Secunda* there are ten chapters, the authenticity of which is

[1] Cf. Lemmens, *Doc. Antiq.* II. pp. 17-18; Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect.* CXIX. *seq.*

[2] M. Sabatier entitled his work: *Speculum Perfectionis seu S. Francisci Assisiensis Legendi Antiquissima, auctore fratre Leone;* and he announced that it was written in 1227. He was led to this conclusion by the date affixed to the Mazarine MS. upon which his edition is based. That MS. gives the date 1228. It is now certain that this is a scribe's mistake for 1318. Concerning the question of the *Spec. Perfect.* cf. Van Ortroy, *Anal. Boll.* XIX. p. 58 *seq.*; Faloci-Pulignani, in *Misc. Franc.* tom. VII.; Ed. d'Alençon, *Annales Franciscaines*, tom. XXXVII.; Little, in *English Historical Review*, vol. XVII. p. 655; A. Fierens, loc. cit. Cf. *Études Franciscaines*, XXVII. p. 337 *seq.* See also the works cited above concerning the *Leg.* 3 *Soc.*

[3] In *Doc. Antiq.* II. Cf. Van Ortroy, *Anal. Boll.* XXI. p. 114; Faloci-Pulignani, *Misc. Franc.* VIII. p. 131; Lemmens, *Voix de Saint Antoine*, Avril, 1903.

[4] Cf. Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect. passim*; Goetz, *Die Quellen*, pp. 216-21.

guaranteed by Ubertino da Casale and other writers of the time of Ubertino. We know that Ubertino had in his hands the *rotuli* of Brother Leo and that he was acquainted with a book written by Brother Leo, which at the time was in the treasury of the Sagro Convento. His quotations from the writings of Brother Leo may therefore be accepted as authentic.[1] But whether the *rotuli* formed part of the documents sent to Crescentius, or whether they were an independent document, we have no means of judging. But for practical purposes the question is of little moment.

As regards the remaining portions of Sabatier's edition they have the same value, neither more nor less, which belongs to many other documents which appear in the compilations made at the beginning of the fourteenth century, for the authenticity of which we have no positive proof. Further research may yet prove them to be authentic, or may give us the original documents upon which these portions are based. But of this more will be said as we proceed.

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3. *The Later Compilations.*

Towards the end of the thirteenth century there set in a period of restless activity on the part of the friars to gather together all that had been written about St. Francis. St. Bonaventure's legend, far from satisfying the body of the friars, only produced dissatisfaction. The party of the strict observance did not conceal their opinion that this legend did not give an adequate account of St. Francis' intentions concerning the vocation of the Order: even the "moderate" party desired a more complete biography. At the General Chapter of Padua, held in 1277, under St. Bonaventure's successor, it was ordained that the brethren in all the provinces should seek information as to the deeds of St. Francis and other holy brothers.[2] Shortly after this there appeared the *Liber de Laudibus*,[3] written by Bernard of Besse, who had been one of St. Bonaventure's secretaries. It is but a small work; yet of great value, inasmuch

[1] Cf. Lemmens, *Doc. Antiq.* I. p. 75 *seq.*; Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect.* CXL. *seq.*

[2] Glassberger, *Anal. Franc.* II. p. 89.

[3] Two editions of this work were published in 1897: one by Fr. Hilarin of Lucerne, the other by the Quaracchi editors in *Anal. Franc.* tom. III. Both publications include the *Catalogus Generalium Ministrorum* attributed to the same author. Cf. *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an II. fasc. III. p. 430 *seq.*

as it relates several incidents concerning St. Francis and the Order, not found in the earlier legends. The author evidently was acquainted not only with the earlier Celanese legends but also with Celano's later works and the writings of the companions: though his acquaintance with these documents may have been at second hand.[1]

Probably somewhat earlier the legend known as the *Anonymus Perusinus*[2] was written, which also contains a few details not found in the official legends. In fact it would seem that the period of active compilations began about 1270. An instance of this activity in gathering together the records of St. Francis' life is to be seen in regard to the Porziuncola indulgence.[3] Probably not unconnected with this activity was the formal act of donation concerning Monte Alvernia made by Count Roland of Chiusi in 1274.[4]

At first these compilations, it would seem, were made independently by individuals or communities, anxious to make good the omissions in the legend by St. Bonaventure, or to collect the traditions which had been preserved in particular provinces. Later there was an active research for lost documents, notably those of the saint's companions. About the beginning of the fourteenth century these original collections are found incorporated in larger collections; and these larger collections were again later on gathered together into one series of documents. Thus the *Actus S. Francisi* in which the greater part of the original *Floretum* was incorporated, and the *Speculum Perfectionis*, comprising amongst other documents, a collection of the writings of the companions, are found incorporated in a larger collection, compiled by a friar from the Baltic province, and known as the "*Fac secundum exemplar*" collection. It is found in a large number of codices scattered throughout

[1] It is curious that Bernard of Besse does not mention the *Legenda Secunda* amongst the existing legends, though he makes express mention of Celano's *Legenda Prima*. He could hardly have been ignorant of its existence. The explanation would seem to be that the *Legenda Secunda* was still officially banned, and not improbably he quoted from extracts which were made by various brethren at the time when the codices of this and other banned legends were being destroyed.

[2] Published in part in *Acta SS.* Octob. II. *Comment. Prær.* The complete text is given by Van Ortroy in *Misc. Franc.* IX. pp. 33-48.

[3] *Vide supra*, p. 480. [4] Cf. Sbaralea, *Bull.* IV. p. 156, note *h*.

Europe, of which the Vatican MS. 4354 is one of the earliest examples.[1] The collection was probably made between 1318 and 1328.[2]

The compiler of this collection tells us in a preface that he gathered his materials from four sources :—

(*a*) A book of Frederic, Archbishop of Riga.[3]

(*b*) The *Legenda Vetus*, which he had heard read in the refectory of the friars at Avignon, and which was read there by command of the Minister-General.[4]

(*c*) The writings of the companions of St. Francis.

(*d*) Finally, he has written "certain wonderful things" concerning St. Anthony, John of Alvernia, and other holy brothers.

When we turn to the collection itself we find that it embraces :—

(*a*) Eighty-one chapters of the *Spec. Perfect.*, though not in the same order as in Sabatier's edition and in some cases with notable variants.

(*b*) Nearly the whole of the *Actus S. Francisci*.

(*c*) Six chapters concerning the observance of the Rule which would seem to have been taken together out of some other document.

(*d*) Some writings of St. Francis.

(*e*) Sayings of Brother Giles and other friars.

(*f*) Attestations concerning the Porziuncola indulgence.

These documents are found in all the codices : but in some cases additions have been made by copyists or collectors.

One would like to know how far the collections, which now go by the title, *Fac secundum exemplar*, represent the actual collection made by the Baltic friar. Is the entire collection—save for a few manifest additions—his, or has it been greatly added to ?

M. Sabatier, after a study of the Leignitz MS.,[5] concludes that the collection, as therein represented, is in two parts : the first part being

[1] Cf. Sabatier, *Spec. Perfect.* CLXXVI.-CC. : *Description du Manuscrit Franciscain de Leignitz* in *Opuscules*, tom. I. fasc. II. ; also cf. *ibid.* fasc. III.

[2] Cf. Jörgensen, op. cit. p. lxxxviii : Sabatier says between 1322 and 1328 Cf. *Actus S. Franc.* Preface, p. xviii.

[3] Frederick was Archbishop of Riga from 1304 until 1341.

[4] Either Gonsalvez or Michael of Cesena, both of whom were favourable to the strict observance. Gonsalvez was Minister-General 1304-1313 ; Michael of Cesena, 1316-1328.

[5] Cf. *Opuscules*, I. fasc. III.

the original collection of the Baltic friar. Now this first part embraces sixty-one chapters taken from the *Spec. Perfect.*; seven chapters of unknown origin, but all bearing upon the strict observance of the Rule; and thirty-one chapters corresponding to the *Actus*, of which the first sixteen chapters concern St. Francis, whilst the last fifteen tell the wonderful deeds of St. Anthony, John of Alvernia, and other friars of "blessed memory". There are eight intercalated chapters which seem to stand apart from these groups. From this M. Sabatier concludes that:—

(*a*) "The book of Archbishop Frederic" was in fact the *Spec. Perfect.*
(*b*) The seven chapters bearing on the observance of the Rule are from the *Legenda Vetus.*
(*c*) The first sixteen chapters corresponding to the *Actus* are from writings of the companions of the saint.
(*d*) The last fifteen chapters of the *Actus* are those writings relating to St. Anthony, of which the Baltic friar speaks.

If the order of chapters given in the Leignitz MS. could be shown to be the original order, there would certainly be much to be said in favour of M. Sabatier's conclusions. Further on, however, we shall note one serious objection to this division. Meanwhile, those seven chapters which, according to M. Sabatier, are extracted from the *Legenda Vetus* are of primary interest to the students of Franciscan history. Whether they are portions of the *Legenda Vetus* or not, is a matter of secondary importance. What really matters is their substantial authenticity.

There can be no doubt that they represent a tradition of the party of the strict observance, and moreover a tradition with its source in the earlier days of the Order before 1246; but it may be doubted whether the tradition is given in these documents in its primitive form. A comparison of the chapter, "*De apparitione stupenda angeli*,"[1] with the recital and explanation of the same story by Celano[2] indicates an evolution as to form. In Celano's day the various explanations of the vision are given as distinct from the story of the vision: in the present document the explanation is worked into the vision itself. Again the chapter, "*De statu*

[1] *Opuscules*, p. 99.

[2] II Celano II. 82, cf. *ad finem: Plures oraculum istud religioni coaptant*, etc.

modo futura fratrum."[1] is manifestly a recital in which the original words of St. Francis have been repeated in the light of later events. On the other hand, the chapter, "*De sanctitate inter fideles*,"[2] is but a summary of chapter XVI. of the Rule of 1221. Of special interest are the chapters "*De intentione Sancti Francisci*," and "*Exemplum de prædicta voluntate*".[4] In the former chapter we have an interesting account of how the Pope modified the Rule of 1223 before confirming it. A similar account is given in the *Historia VII Tribulat.*,[5] and it is most probably based upon the writings of Brother Leo: though doubtless the conversation between St. Francis and the Pope is to be taken with due regard to the custom of ancient and mediaeval historians of making their characters speak always in the first person. Nor is the story of the German friar in the latter chapter at all improbable, having regard to what we know of St. Francis' mind. We may therefore take these chapters as witnessing to an early tradition.

But whether as they stand in the collection "*Fac secundum exemplar*," these chapters were taken from the *Legenda Vetus*, or whether, as seems more likely, from "the truthful sayings of the holy companions of St. Francis, put into writing by approved men of the Order"—as the Baltic friar writes—we have no certain test to judge by.

True it is, the friar tells us in his preface that the *Legenda Vetus* he refers to was quoted verbally and frequently by St. Bonaventure in the *Legenda Major*, and from this description we might be led to infer that it could be no other than the Celanese legends or the *Legenda 3 Soc.* But then amongst the documents in the collection there are none that can be identified with these legends.

A not improbable hypothesis is that this *Legenda Vetus* was a collection of manuscripts embracing the *Legenda 3 Soc.* and the *Spec. Perfect.*—of which there are known examples[7]—and that it is a portion of the *Spec.*

[1] *Opuscules*, p. 87.

[2] *Opuscules*, p. 102. The phrase "Hanc petere judicabat" [S. Franciscus] proves that the writer is summarizing this chapter of the Rule; and there is no reason for thinking we have here an earlier version than is contained in the Rule of 1221.

[3] *Opuscules*, p. 90. [4] *ibid.* p. 96.

[5] *Vide supra*, p. 385. [6] Erhle, *Archiv*, III. p. 601.

[7] Whence it is concluded by some critics that the *Legenda 3 Soc.* and the original *Spec. Perfect.* formed one legend, namely the complete legend by the companions. Cf. Tillemann, op. cit. p. 123; Joergensen, op. cit. p. lxxxvi.

Perfect. which the Baltic friar extracted. In fact it would seem that the collections based upon documents or traditions earlier than the *Legenda Major* were generically described as *Legenda Vetus* or *Legenda Antiqua.* The collection "*Fac secundum exemplar*" is itself styled *Legenda Antiqua*; yet the *Legenda Antiqua* quoted in later writings is not always found to indicate this collection.

***

Some consideration must now be given to the *Fioretti*, that delightful Italian book which has done so much to make the Franciscan legend known and loved. The *Fioretti* shares with the *Sacrum Commercium*[1] the claim to be the purest literary embodiment of the Franciscan spirit. But whereas this latter work is an allegory, the *Fioretti* claims to be history. The claim has indeed been much disputed, and for a long time the book was held by the critics to be without historical value. To-day, in the light of recent research, the historian regards the *Fioretti* more favourably.

There can be no doubt now that the Italian work is a translation from a Latin original. The translator is unknown:[2] whoever he was, he had a marvellous gift of literary expression, which has made his work one of the literary treasures of the world. In the printed editions and in most of the MSS. the *Fioretti* has attached to it four other documents: the Considerations upon the Sacred Stigmata, the life of Brother Jupiter, the life of Brother Giles, and the sayings of Brother Giles: but these do not belong to the original book.[3]

The *Fioretti* proper falls into two main sections: the first section comprises the first thirty-eight chapters, which tell of St. Francis and his companions; the second section takes in the last thirteen chapters, relating the wonderful deeds of certain friars of the Marches of Ancona.

[1] *Sacrum Commercium B. Francisci cum Domina Paupertate*, edited by P. Ed. d'Alençon (Rome, 1900), who claims that it was written in 1227 by Giovanni Parenti, the first Minister-General after St. Francis. An exquisite English translation has been made by M. Montgomery Carmichael under the title, *The Lady Poverty* (London: Murray, 1902).

[2] It has been attributed to Giovanni di San Lorenzo but without sufficient historical evidence.

[3] Cf. *The Little Flowers of St. Francis, Introduction.* (London, Cath. Truth Soc., ed. 1912.)

These are two chapters intercalated between the two sections, of which St. Anthony of Padua is the hero.

It becomes evident as one studies the *Fioretti* that we have here a compilation from different sources. The first section probably represents a compilation of much earlier date than the second: also, it probably originated in the Marches, and is in fact a collection of stories which different friars of that province had heard from the saint's own companions. For in cap. 16 we are explicitly told that Brother James of Massa had the story of the preaching to the birds from Brother Masseo himself; and in cap. 32, Brother James of Fallerone is said to have spoken with the same Brother Masseo about the incident related in that chapter.

Further, it is noteworthy that nearly all the friars whose glories form the subject of the second section were intimate with St. Francis and his companions, or at least with their associates. Brother Simon was received into the Order during the lifetime of the saint;[1] Brother James of Fallerone (as we have said) had spoken with Brother Masseo;[2] Brother James of Massa, with Brothers Masseo, Giles, and Juniper;[3] Brother John of la Penna received the habit from Brother Philip, probably Philip the Long, one of the first companions and a preacher of great eloquence;[4] Brother Peter of Monticello and Brother Bentivoglio both were received by St. Francis himself;[5] whilst Brother Conrad of Offida[6] and Brother John of Fermo, in their retreats on Monte Alvernia,[7] must have made the acquaintance of those who knew the saint's companions. May not we assume that these friars were held in special reverence in the Marches because of their intimacy with those who knew the story of the first Franciscan days? In the Marches the friars of the strict observance were numerous and venturesome. They would be likely to treasure traditions of the primitive life; and those who delivered the traditions would be held in high reverence. Consequently we may believe that the *Fioretti* represents, as far as it goes, the story of St. Francis as told in the Marches of Ancona, by those who knew St. Francis and his companions; and we shall not be far wrong in assuming that the stories circulating amongst the friars of the Marches were collected and written down not long after 1270, at the time when the friars were so anxious to collect and preserve the traditions concerning their holy founder. If we admit all this, then the *Fioretti* must be regarded as a source of Francis-

[1] *Vide* cap. 41. [2] loc. cit. [3] Capp. 16 and 48. [4] Cap. 45.
[5] Cap. 42. [6] Capp. 42-4. [7] Capp. 49-53.

can history of no mean value. At the same time we have a canon of criticism by which to judge the historical value of the stories as they stand: they have, in short, the value of oral traditions of the first or second generation.

But in judging the historical value of the *Fioretti* we shall have a surer test when we discover the Latin original of the Italian translation. So far we can only test it by the corresponding chapters in the *Actus B. Francisci*, a Latin compilation of a somewhat earlier date than the *Fioretti*. In this compilation all but six chapters of the *Fioretti* are found in an almost equivalent Latin version; but with a difference which proves the *Actus* to be the earlier and more authentic version. For in the *Actus* the personal note is more in evidence: the stories are more frequently related with an addition such as: "as I myself have seen".[1] But this characteristic of the *Actus*, it should be noted, is found almost exclusively in the chapters corresponding with the second section of the *Fioretti*.

We have already noticed that six chapters of the *Fioretti* have no corresponding passages in the *Actus*. From this it would seem that the translator of the *Fioretti* had before him a Latin work other than the *Actus*, from which this compilation itself was also partly quarried. Which conclusion is the more probable since the *Actus*, which is by far the more lengthy work, is evidently drawn from other sources besides those from which the *Fioretti* springs. In some parts one misses the true ring of the story-tellers of the Marches.[2] On the other hand there are some "Non-Fioretti" chapters in the *Actus* which might well find a place in the *Fioretti*. It is, however, not unlikely that the original *Fioretti* was added to by different collectors amongst the friars of the Marches. A definitive edition of the *Actus* may solve these difficulties.[3]

It has been justly remarked that the *Fioretti* can be claimed by no individual author. It is a compilation of several lesser compilations. All we can say as to individual authorship is that a certain Brother

[1] Cf. T. W. Arnold: *The Authorship of the Fioretti*, Occasional Paper (International Society of Franciscan Studies—British Branch), No. III.

[2] e.g. *Actus*, capp. 58, 61, 62, 65.

[3] M. Sabatier's edition published in *Collection d'Études*, tom. IV. is confessedly but a tentative edition. (*Vide ibid.* Preface.) It is to be noticed that in the collection "*Fac secundum exemplar*," the *Actus* is a much shorter compilation and excludes ten chapters of the *Fioretti*, which however appear in other portions of the collection.

Ugolino Brunforte had something to do with it. He was probably one of several collectors of the traditions in the Marches.[1] The *Fioretti* dates from not later than 1328, since it is for the greater part found in the collection "*Fac secundum exemplar*". It could not have been completed before 1322, in which year Brother John of Fermo (or John of Alvernia as he is usually called) died.

***

There yet remain other sources for which the same collection "*Fac secundum exemplar*" may be said to stand sponsor, such as the *Vitæ* of Brothers Giles and Juniper, all of which have doubtless a similar history to the compilations already referred to. One of these at least can be traced authentically to Brother Leo, the companion of St. Francis, and that is the *Vita Fr. Ægidii*.

We have the testimony of Salimbene that Brother Leo wrote the life of Brother Giles; and though it is doubtful whether any extant "Life" is Brother Leo's original work, there can be no doubt that the "Lives" in the Chron. XXIV. Gen.,[2] and the *Fioretti* and others similar to these, are more or less versions of that work. The *Incipit*, with which these "Lives" for the most part begin, contains an affirmation that the writer was well acquainted with Brother Giles and his companions.[3] In the Fribourg and Leignitz codices of the "*Fac secundum exemplar*" collection Brother Leo is expressly mentioned as the author. But according to mediæval usage, this need not mean more than that the work is substantially drawn from that of the author named.[4]

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Here we may call attention to the writings of certain of the Spirituals.

[1] Cf. *Fioretti*, cap. 45; *Actus*, cap. 9. Ugolino entered the Order about 1278. In 1295 he was appointed Bishop of Teramo by Celestine V, but the appointment was quashed by Boniface VIII. Ugolino died in 1348.

[2] *Anal. Franc.* III. pp. 74-114.

[3] "*Prout a suis socius intellexi et ab eodem viro sancto, cui familiaris fui, experientia didici.*"

[4] In 1901 Fr. Lemmens published what he then considered to be the original *Vita Fr. Aegidii* by Brother Leo (*Doc. Antiq.* I): but this work is evidently a much later version. Cf. Van Ortroy in *Anal. Bull.* XXI. p. 122; Sabatier, *Actus*, p. lxviii. Concerning the *Vita B. Fr. Aegidii*, cf. Menge, *Der Selige Aegidius von Assisi*; Fr. Paschal Robinson, *The Golden Sayings of Brother Giles*, Introduction.

to which we have indeed already referred. There can be no doubt that we owe it to the zeal, temperate or intemperate as you may judge it, of the party of the strict observance that the writings of the companions have come down to us at all. These writings were to them a sort of fifth gospel which they held in exceeding reverence and quoted as a final argument. It is thus that some of the writings of Brother Leo have come down to us, which he wrote concerning the intention of St. Francis in the matter of the Rule. They are found textually quoted in the writings of Peter John Olivi[1] [died 1398], Ubertino da Casale[2] [died *circa* 1338], and Angelo Clareno[3] [died 1336]. Two *Opuscules*, closely corresponding with the descriptions given by Ubertino da Casale and Angelo Clareno of two books written by Brother Leo, were published in 1901 by Father Lemmens from a MS. in the Convent of St. Isidore. They are the *Intentio Regulæ* and the *Verba S. P. Francisci.*[4]

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Of the compilations made at the end of the fourteenth century, little need be said here.

The *Chronicle of the Twenty-four Generals* was completed about 1374. The authorship has been generally ascribed to Arnold of Sarano, who, as Bartholomew of Pisa tells us, was "for a long time Minister of Aquitaine," and "transcribed all that he could find concerning the Blessed Francis".[5] Internal evidence proves that it was written by a friar of Aquitaine, for the author shows an intimate knowledge of the provincials of that province.[6] Whoever he was, the author was a painstaking compiler, and he had a knowledge of documents which are now lost.[7] Critically he is often at fault.[8]

[1] *Expositio Regulæ*, cap. x.

[2] *Arbor Vitæ*, *Responsio* and *Declaratio.*

[3] *Expositio Regulæ* and *Hist. VII Tribulat.*

[4] Cf. *Doc. Antiq.* I. p. 75 *seq.* It is, however, doubtful whether the *Verba* as published by Lemmens is the primitive text. Cf. *ibid.* pp. 81-2.

[5] *De Conformit.* in *Anal. Franc.* IV. p. 573. Wadding (*Annales*, ad an. 1376) says: "*a quibusdam judicatur auctor Chronicorum XXIV Generalium*".

[6] In all probability, however, the compilation is not the work of one author, but of several.

[7] e.g. He had seen the letter which accompanied the *Tractatus de Miraculis* (*Anal. Franc.* III. p. 276).

[8] The chronicle has been edited in *Anal. Franc.* III.

More interesting, as regards the history of St. Francis, is the work of Bartholomew of Pisa, *De Conformitate Vitæ Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Jesu*, which was approved by the General Chapter of Assisi in 1399. The author, with the instinct of the historian, constantly gives the sources of his recitals. He thus refers by name to Thomas of Celano, St. Bonaventure, the Legend of the Three Companions, the *Speculum Perfectionis*. But his frequent reference to the *Legenda Antiqua* is rather puzzling. For the most part the passages thus referred to, are found in the "*Fac secundum exemplar*" collection, but sometimes such passages are found not in that collection, but elsewhere, e.g. the *Legenda Prima* of Celano. Possibly he had before him a larger collection than any we now possess, in which these other passages were embodied.[1]

4. *The Chronicles dealing professedly with the History of the Order rather than with the Life of St. Francis.*

Two early chronicles giving an account of the beginnings of the German and English Provinces of Friars Minor are of great value as regards the story of St. Francis. Brother *Giordano de Giano*, who wrote an account of the first years of the Friars Minor in Germany, was present at the General Chapter of 1221 and had some personal knowledge of the saint—whose sanctity, however, the chronicler naïvely confesses he did not fully appreciate until the saint's canonisation.[2] Giordano dictated his chronicle in 1262 when he was advanced in years,[3] but he seems to have been endowed with an accurate memory, since in only a few details is his evidence called in question by critical research. For candour and simple human feeling there are few chronicles to put beside that of the Italian friar who went to Germany in fear of his life, but learned to love the country as though it were his own. His account of how he came to be included amongst the friars sent on the German mission in 1221 shows that he was of a curious and observant cast of mind in regard to matters

[1] A critical edition of the *De Conformitate* has been published by the Quaracchi Fathers in *Anal. Franc.* IV. and V.

[2] *Chron. Jordani*, no. 59, in *Anal. Franc.* I. p. 18.

[3] The chronicle has been published in *Anal. Franc.* I.; and by Boehmer, in *Collection d'Études*, Tome IV. A continuation of the chronicle is given in *Archiv. Franc. Hist.*, January, 1910.

which interested him. Though concerned chiefly with the progress of the Order in Germany, the chronicle gives many illuminative stories relating to the life of St. Francis, notably to the saint's journey to the East, and his subsequent recall to quell the disturbances which had meanwhile arisen in the Order.

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The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston : De Adventu FF. Minorum in Angliam, though not so rich in matters concerning St. Francis as the preceding, is nevertheless our authority for the coming of the friars to England in 1224. Incidentally, too, it adds to our knowledge of the saint's character. It was finished about 1260.[1]

***

Salimbene's Chronicle contributes incidentally to our knowledge of early Franciscan days and sources. It was written between 1282 and 1287.[2] Though written by a Friar Minor, it can hardly be called a chronicle of the Order in the strict use of the words. He tells us much about the Order and many things besides in an intimate sort of way : it might be described as a book of gossip, but of gossip shot through with keen observation and shrewd judgments.

***

Passing by the Chronicle of the XXIV. Generals, of which we have already spoken, we come next to the sixteenth century chronicles, notable amongst which are the *Chronicles of Mariano of Florence*[3] and the *Chronicle of Mark of Lisbon*.[4] Both chroniclers seem to have had access to

[1] Eccleston's chronicle has been edited by Brewer in *Monumenta Franciscana*, I. and in part by Howlett in *Monumenta Franc.* II. ; and again by the Quaracchi editors in *Anal. Franc.* I. A definitive edition has been published by Prof. A. G. Little (Paris, 1909). Cf. *The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston* (London, 1909) by the present writer.

[2] Cf. *Chronica fratris Salimbene Parmensis* (Parma, 1857). A critical edition was published in 1905, in *Mon. Germ. Hist. Script.* XXXII. pars I.

[3] Mariano's chronicles are not yet published, but a compendium of the chronicles is given in *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. II. *seq.*

[4] Published at Lisbon in 1556-68.

documents which are now lost. Mariano of Florence has given us valuable information concerning the early days of the Third Order.

Glassberger's Chronicle, written about 1508, is chiefly concerned with the German Province; it is incidentally of interest as concerning St. Francis.[1]

Finally there is Luke Wadding's stupendous work, *Annales Minorum*, published between 1625 and 1654. As might be expected in such a mighty labour undertaken by one man, the critical faculty was less in evidence than the acquisitive. Wadding's chronology is frequently at fault; and the sources from which he compiled were often of inferior value even when more authentic records were at hand.

III.

Writers other than those of the Franciscan Order.

Under this heading the first place must be given to the writings of *Jacques de Vitry*. Two letters of his are known, one written from Genoa in 1216, and another from Damietta in 1219, both detailing his observations of St. Francis and the new Franciscan Order. He also mentions them in his *Historia Occidentalis*. As of an eye-witness, looking on from outside the Order, his shrewd observation is of special weight.

Again, there is the declaration of *Thomas of Spalatro*, who was present when St. Francis was preaching in Bologna in 1222, in which he describes the appearance of the saint and his manner of preaching.[2]

Besides these, we have numerous valuable evidences in various chronicles of the time. But for all these I refer my readers to the scholarly collections of such evidences, published by P. Golubovich in his encyclopædic *Bibliotheca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa* (Quaracchi, 1906), and by P. Lemmens in *Archiv. Franc. Hist.* an. I. fasc. I. *seq.* under the title *Testimonia Minora saec XIII de S. P. Francisco.*

[1] This chronicle is published in *Anal. Franc.* II. Other works of incidental value to the student of the first Franciscan days are *Umbria Seraphica* by Antonio a Stronconio (*Misc. Franc.* II.); *Historiarum Seraphicæ Religionis*, by Rudulphius Tossianinensis; *De origine Seraphicæ Religionis*, by Ven. Francis Gonzaga.

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 359.

IV.

Diplomatic and Legal Documents.

These include Papal letters,[1] the registers of Honorius III[2] and Gregory IX,[3] and various legal documents, notably the *Instrumentum Donationis Montis Alvernae*.[4] The recently discovered peace-treaty made between Perugia and Assisi in 1203 is of value as affording authentic evidence regarding the war in which St. Francis took part.

[1] Cf. Sbaralea, *Bullarium Franciscanum* and the calendar of Papal letters by Potthast.

[2] Pressutti, *Regesta Honorii III.*

[3] *Registres*, ed. Auvray; Guido Levi, *Registri dei Cardinal Ugolino d' Ostia e Ottaviano degli Ubaldini.*

[4] Sbaralea, loc. cit. IV. p. 156. Of incidental value are the contract published by P. Ed. d'Alençon in *Frère Jacqueline*, pp. 37-8; and the legal document published by A. Cristofani in *Delle Storie di Assisi*, ed. 1902, pp. 50-1.

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